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# VIDEO GUIDE

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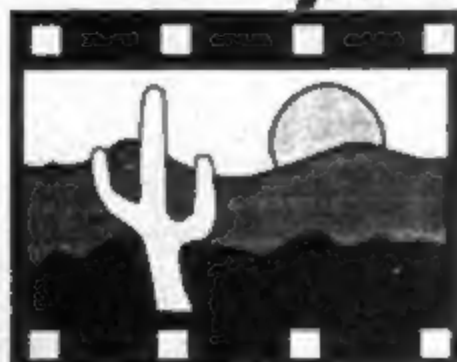
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77 Mins. - Cat. No. 8985 - \$30.00

Something strange is going on up in the mountains of a tiny winter resort community. Every time you turn around, innocent townsfolk are disappearing in increasing numbers. But this isn't just any mountain...this is the Indian burial ground of the Chakura tribe! Worse yet, the sleepy town's hills are infested with living totem poles, creatures of all shapes and sizes and the legend of the Winterbeast! Fearless park ranger Sgt. Bill Whitman and his bumbling night-hand man Solomon are hot on the trail when one of their rangers returns from a scuffle with an unknown entity. Along the way they come upon Sheldon, the owner of the nearby Wild Goose Lodge and a permanent fixture in the town's history. Unbeknownst to them, Sheldon hides a dark secret that could lead to the destruction of the entire village...and the world! It's The Evil Dead meets Northern Exposure!



**HEARTSTOPPER**  
96 Mins. - Cat. No. 8986 - \$30.00

In colonial Pittsburgh, Benjamin Latham, a progressive Tory physician wrongfully accused of vampirism, is hung. To prevent his return from the grave, he is staked through the heart and buried at a crossroad. Now, two hundred years later, the burial site is unearthed by a construction crew and the young doctor emerges from the grave...alive. In his quest for answers, Benjamin falls in love with Lenora Clayton, a photojournalist researching colonial Pittsburgh, and through her locates his descendant, Matthew Latham, an antique dealer obsessed with his unusual family history. To feed his special needs, Benjamin compulsively continues to kill but disciplines himself by limiting his prey to evil members of society. The resulting death spree becomes the obsession of policeman Ron Vergo, who is determined to put an end to the horror.



**MIDNIGHT 2:  
SEX, DEATH AND VIDEOTAPE**  
70 Mins. - Cat. No. 8987 - \$30.00

Abraham, the last surviving member of the crazed family in Midnight, has taken up residence in the suburbs of Pittsburgh. Armed with a video camera and his various implements of death, he stalks the streets of the city to satisfy his bloodlust...searching the psyches of his victims for his perfect mate. Enter Rebecca, a beautiful young bank teller who has unwittingly come under Abraham's deadly camera lens. With the help of a hard-boiled police detective, she may be able to solve the murder of her best friend...or become the ultimate sacrifice in a deadly game of cat-and-mouse. From director John A. Russo comes a suspense-filled, nightmarish voyage through the mind of a serial killer...a voyage that leads straight into the heart of Midnight 2: Sex, Death and Videotape!



**THE MAJORETTES**  
93 Mins. - Cat. No. 8988 - \$30.00

Someone's killing the beautiful young majorettes at the local high school. Could it be Henry, the voyeuristic janitor? Tommy, the nerdy photographer for the high school yearbook? Maco Jackson, the sleazy local drug pusher? Jeff Holloway, the star quarterback for the high school football team, whose rugged good looks could possibly be hiding a dark and terrible secret? Or could the identity of the killer be just one of the many incredibly shocking twists you'll discover as you watch The Majorettes? From the first gruesome murder to an ending that literally explodes with violence, you will descend into a high school nightmare, where greed, lust, and murderous revenge pass for school spirit, where every locker could be hiding a dead body, where the price for being beautiful is paid in blood...and where everyone's favorite subject is the art of survival!



**DEAD IS DEAD**  
75 Mins. - Cat. No. 1029 - \$20.00

A man named Eric is out to avenge his brother's death at the hands of drug dealers. Along the way, Eric is attacked and partially dismembered by a mutant creature and left for dead. A beautiful young woman named Laura finds him and uses an experimental drug on him known as Daxtal. The drug grows back Eric's severed limb within a twenty-four hour period. And if administered soon enough, Daxtal can also revive the dead! Eric uses his supply of the drug to pay off a large debt to his brother's killers, but unknown to him, the Daxtal he gives away is a bad batch...a batch that can turn those who use it into the walking dead! Eric's search for the spoiled Daxtal leads him to New York City, where he discovers that the drug is hidden in an abandoned school mere miles from his home. Can he get it back in time...before it falls into the wrong hands?



**THE ZOMBIE ARMY**  
80 Mins. - Cat. No. 1030 - \$20.00

Army Sergeant Eileen Sadow has a problem. The Pentagon brass bought a former insane asylum to use as a base for the elite experimental female unit The Lethal Ladies. The problem is that they didn't check the asylum's shelter for leftover inmates! Two were left behind when the nuthouse was abandoned. Jim is a deranged psychotic who thinks that he's a psychiatrist. He likes to experiment with shock therapy equipment. Mary, a looney nymphomaniac, helps. And she really likes soldiers! The two freaks wreak havoc on the Army by capturing soldiers and turning them into mindless zombies. Trapped in the tunnels under the old asylum, The Lethal Ladies must invent weapons to destroy the living dead! It's the world's first zombie combat rock music video! Watch out, Saddam Hussein...you're no match for Operation "Zombie" Storm and...The Zombie Army!



**GOBLIN**  
75 Mins. - Cat. No. 1031 - \$20.00

A newlywed couple (Bobby Westrick & Jenny Adams) move into their new house with the help of their friends. But what they don't realize is that twenty years ago, the previous owner of the house...a former practicing witchcraft...inadvertently raised a monstrous creature from the depths of hell...and now it's coming back to make up for lost time! The Goblin, set free from its dark prison within the earth, lays waste to the Missouri countryside, hungry to mangle or kill anything or anyone in its path. The young people, trapped inside the house, are pushed to the nightmarish extremes, forced to retaliate...or become the next victim of the Goblin!

Goblin delivers unbelievable scenes of violence and gore...just pray he doesn't deliver them to your doorstep!



**PREHISTORIC BIMBOS  
IN ARMAGEDDON CITY**  
70 Mins. - Cat. No. 1032 - \$20.00

Welcome to Old Chicago City...the last remaining outpost of civilization after World War III. Though the city is ruled by the evil Nemesis (Robert Volkrath) and his army of cyborgs, the only thing standing in the way of utter post-nuclear domination is Trianna (Tonia Monahan) and her fierce, beautiful tribe of Prehistoric Bimbos! When Nemesis, with the help of the metal-clawed tyrant Salacious Thatch (Deric Bernier) attempts to destroy the Bimbos once and for all, he quickly discovers it's not going to be as easy as he thought! Filled with wacky action, goofy creatures, scenery chewing villains, and enough bimbos to fill two post-nuclear action comedies, this film will blow your mind. Strap yourself in and prepare yourself for...Prehistoric Bimbos in Armageddon City!



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# VIDEO GUIDE

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#### COVER

JONATHAN REISS ON THE SET OF  
HIS VIDEO **HAPPINESS IN SLAVERY**.  
PHOTO: DAVID E. WILLIAMS

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**A FILM BY TODD PHILLIPS**

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body is the bullets and the  
audience is the target."—GG Allin**

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FTVG #8



## TURD TASTERS GIVE THANKS

PO Box 652  
Bergen, NY 14416

Dear Film Threat,

Thanks for reviewing my two flicks in your latest issue ("Triangle" and "A Thin Line"). Even though they only got a 2, at least it's better than a 1. Also, when I premiered them in a local theatre, the audience loved 'em!!! Anyway, I'll soon send you my next flick, "Zombie Massacre," where I have a guy eating shit. Maybe that will earn me a 3!!!

Thanks,

*Raymond J. Santoro*

Raymond J. Santoro

Raymond,

Any film that features a shit-eating scene will receive bonus points on our ratings scale. So, considering your previous efforts, it's possible for even you to earn a much-coveted "3" rating.

## SHUT IN WRITES FOR HELP

DAVID GROSSMAN  
BOX 44062  
TUCSON, ARIZONA. 85733.

CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT  
FILM THREAT VIDEO

RE: VHS VIDEO TAPES/SCRIPTS: **HARDCORE I & II, RED, TRIBULATION 99,**  
AND/OR OTHERS.

DEAR CHAIRMAN/PRESIDENT:

I AM WRITING TO YOU TO SEE IF YOU COULD PLEASE HELP ME. I AM A DISABLED VETERAN, TRYING TO EXIST ON THE MONTHLY CHECK I RECEIVE FROM THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, OUT OF WHICH, I PAY MY RENT, GAS & ELECTRIC, AND BUY MY FOOD FOR THE MONTH, AND HAVE MY LAUNDRY DONE, THEN USE THE BALANCE FOR MY CARFARE BACK AND FORTH TO THE V.A. MEDICAL CENTER FOR MY TREATMENTS AND MEDICATIONS, SO BY THE END OF THE MONTH, I'M LUCKY TO HAVE A DOLLAR OR TWO LEFT.

THE REASON FOR WRITING TO YOU IS, MY SISTER (NOW DECEASED) HAD BOUGHT ME A VCR AND A FEW VHS VIDEO TAPES, AND SINCE I HAVE PLAYED THEM OVER AND OVER SO MANY TIMES, THEY ARE COMPLETELY WORE OUT, AND THE LIBRARY HERE DOES NOT HAVE THAT GREAT OF A SELECTION TO BORROW, NOR ON MY "FIXED INCOME," CAN I AFFORD TO BUY OR RENT ANY TAPES IF I WANT TO CONTINUE TO EXIST ON MY SMALL "FIXED INCOME." I ALSO ENJOY READING AND COLLECTING SCRIPTS WHICH I CAN ASSURE YOU, WOULD NEVER BE COPIED, LEANT OUT OR EVER SOLD, AND THESE ARE MY TWO GREAT ENJOYMENTS AND SURE HELPS TO PASS THE TIME.

HOPING THAT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP ME WITH ANY TAPES/SCRIPTS AND THANKING YOU ONCE AGAIN.

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Bram Stoker Club

Dear David,

May I complement you & your staff for the excellent survey of banned films around the world! The U.K. situation is even worse than Graham Rae states, judging by the report in the fanzine "In The Flesh" No. 11, October, 1992, which I enclose for your information.

Here in Ireland, the Govt. passed its own Video Recordings Act in 1989, which is just as strict as the U.K. one of 1985. Most recently, it banned Ken Russell's film "Whore," Madonna's "Erotica," and the new film of Abel Ferrara's "The Bad Lieutenant," which can only be shown in private film clubs outside the censor's control.

However, one piece of good news is that with the Single European Act in force from January 1993, all goods from one European country to another will not need any customs declarations forms. This means that we can order hard-core, adult video films from Amsterdam or Copenhagen without the risk of their being seized by customs officers!

With best wishes for your future success,

Sincerely,

*David Lass*

David Lass

Hon. Secretary, The Bram Stoker Club

Dear David,

Thanks for your compliments. Beating off IS an inalienable right for all to enjoy and I hope you are able to enjoy it soon.

## WOOZY FOR WOO

**HARGROVE ENTERTAINMENT, INC.**  
100-15 84th Ave., 2nd Floor, NY 11435-1935 (718) 637-1342

Dear Mail Bag

Read the article on John Woo (Issue #6) with great interest. It's a good introduction to one of the world's most talented directors. Two points to make. First, I was at the AFM screening of **HARD-BOILED**. It must have been the excitement of the opening sequence that caused Lisa Feerick to imagine a buyer yelling out loud "How much!!" Second, a couple of key sequences shown in the rough cut screening at the AFM have been cut from the release print. In particular, the John Woo in-joke in the second half of the library scene.

Regards,

*Peter M. Hargrove*

Dear Peter,

Unfortunately, **Hard-Boiled**, now exists in at least three versions: The Woo cut, the 5-6 min. shorter HK laserdisc (sans several frames from the eye-popping finale and a third of the elevator shootout) and a heavily trimmed abomination which screened here in Los Angeles. Look for a complete Woo update in the upcoming **FILM THREAT** and prey an American distributor finally picks up this amazing film—but not Fox/Lorber, who savaged **The Killer** with a pan and scan reworking.



## STREET TRASH DEVOTEE

Hell-oh FTVG,  
just one short suggestion:  
could ya please contact Jim (Street Trash) Muro,  
ask him to release his short, Super 8mm  
version of STREET TRASH on video tape?  
After watching a dreadful-pictured bootleg  
video copy of this rare gem, I'm convinced  
there're quite a few people with an interesting  
to see this great collector's item officially  
available.  
Thank for listening and keep up the good work.  
Andy

## BLOBIC YOUTH

DEAR FTVG-  
DIG YOUR PUBLICATION TO  
THE HIGHEST EXTENT. IN  
ISSUE #7 I CAUGHT THE  
SPIEL ON SONIC YOUTH  
AND REMINDED ME OF A  
VIDEO I SAW IN A CLUB IN  
SF ONE NIGHT. IT WAS A  
DOCUMENTARY STYLE  
FEATURING SONIC YOUTH  
AND JOHN ZORN. I THINK  
IT WAS CALLED "PUT  
BLOOD IN THE MUSIC". IT  
WAS THE COOLEST! AND I'D  
LIKE TO OWN A COPY. CAN  
YOU GIVE ME ANY LEADS?  
APPRECIATE YOUR HELP...

BLOB  
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CONCORD, CA 94521

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FTVG,  
JUST GOT A LOOK AT YOUR ZINE AND IT ALMOST MAKES ME WANT TO BUY A  
VCR AND STOP LIVING OVER AT MY CONSUMER ELECTRONICS LADEN  
FRIENDS HOUSES. BUT THEN AGAIN, WHAT ARE FRIENDS FOR ANYWAYS?  
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

GENE GREGER  
GGREGER@RDRC.RPI.EDU



**GRINCH 2: JUDGMENT DAY**

**NO CHRISTMAS  
IN WHOVILLE THIS  
YEAR.**

Dear Gene,  
You know how to live—and survive—through the '90s.

## BLIND LOVE (AND HATE)

SIMON & SCHUSTER

Hey Film Threat:

Either I'm fucking blind or you guys really blow Oydesdale  
schlong. On your teasing, bright-red-to-catch-the-eye cover, you  
had the GALL to say "BANNED FILMS: WHERE TO FIND THEM  
ON VIDEO". Of course I bought the damn thing, and read it  
cover to cover. Did the listing of these so-called places fall out of  
my issue like a lap card? Or (here's my off-the-wall guess) did you  
just put that tag line on the cover to get more impulse sales?

I thought so.

ASSHOLES!

Love,

J.P. Jones

Editor  
Simon & Schuster  
1230 6th Ave. 10th Fl.  
Ny, Ny 10020

Dear John,

The cover of any magazine is designed  
to provoke people into buying what's  
inside. (You do read, don't you? You  
do work in publishing?) However, I  
think we delivered on our promise by  
publishing the GUIDE over the last two  
years—informing you with each issue  
"where to find them on video." Read  
the classifieds and ads, stupid!

I recommend buying a set of back issues.



## WOOZY FOR WOO PT2

Chris Corsi  
102 S Lake #8  
Albany, NY 12208

Dear Film Threat 'nrs,  
What with the market being so bottom heavy with  
underground vid mags, I admit I never perused FTVG. But,  
the article on John Woo was top notch, so I invested  
my 3.95... wisely, it turns out.  
The Woo piece was way overdue, (who says genre  
mags are behind the times?), and a blast; kudos to you  
and to Mr. Ferrick. But, the whole mag turned out to be  
equally prime. Clearly, you people know what you're doing,  
and enjoy it. The deathblow to my hesitance was when  
you said that you weren't content to whine about hard-to-  
find flicks. You were gonna do something. That takes  
balls... many underground rags are sitting pretty, raving  
about third-rate bullshit you'll never say, and feeling  
superior doing it.  
Enough gushing, you get the point. I'm signing  
on for the duration... thrill me.

The Crypt Knight

JK

## ADVICE FOR BRAINDEAD WRITER



LONDON LOS ANGELES HONG KONG PARIS

Dear Gore & Williams,

Great banned films issue, but Graham Rae's piece on UK censorship was bullshit. There was a pointless police raid on horror-vid buffs, but when the victims presented their case on TV they came over as a bunch of inarticulate, deeply sad shut-ins whose lives would be improved by prison gang-rape. I can only assume Rae doesn't get out much, because my local London cinema is currently screening *Bad Karma*, *Drill Bit* and *Nekromantic 2*. What's yours showing?

Admittedly, greedy dealers are still releasing trimmed Italian gore tapes, but any serious fan should already have these. Meanwhile, *Basic Instinct* and *Body Of Evidence* were less censored than US prints, the former keeping Michael Douglas's erection - as if anyone cares - and recent movies seen on British screens are featuring stiff cocks. Full nudity is routine on all national TV stations. One recent series, *The Vampyr*, spilled literally hundreds of gallons of blood while another, *The Art Of Tripping*, checked out creative drug-taking. You can say 'Motherfucker' in a sitcom if you want. *Brain Dead*, uncut, has a national release. In London a few weeks back *Reservoir Dogs* took more money than *A Few Good Men*. *Man Bites Dog* and *The Bad Lieutenant* are doing great box office - really repressive, huh? Move out of Scotland, Graham, it's doing your brain in.

Regards,

*Chris*

Christopher Fowler

Dear Christopher,  
Your powers of deduction are amazing. Graham Rae is a deeply sad shut-in whose life would be improved by a prison gang-rape - i.e. Scottish. Be warned that your boasts will do nothing but attract him and that he now has your address.



WE DIDN'T KNOW YOU CARED

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Our Ref:GP

The Editor  
Film Threat Video Guide  
PO Box 3170  
Los Angeles  
CA 90078-3170

Dear Sir

Your expose of censorship in Issue 7 was all very entertaining, but it did fall down a little on the accuracy front. If I could interpolate a few facts into the fun:

- 1) It is not a crime in Britain to possess unclassified videos (except of child pornography). The offense is to publish or supply videos, so the only 'homes' being raided by the police would be those of distributors.
- 2) TERMINATOR 2 was cut on film and (more heavily) on video for its '15' category: this imposes a legally enforceable age restriction, so is hardly equivalent to the US 'PG13'.
- 3) THE EVIL DEAD has never been banned on film in Britain. It was passed, with cuts, in 1982. On video this version was found to be obscene in a series of court cases, so it was a slightly more abridged version that was passed on video in 1990.
- 4) Films are not excluded from the provisions of the Obscene Publications Act: they were brought within its scope in 1977 as a liberalising move, allowing the defense of 'public good' and requiring that any film be judged 'as a whole' rather than enabling specific scenes or shots to be condemned out of context.

It is, of course, healthy for censorship to be regularly under attack - but it is equally important that the right target is in the view-finder before the trigger is pressed.

Yours sincerely

*Guy Phelps*

Guy Phelps  
Assistant Director



Dear Guy,

You really have that bureaucratic patter down, don't you? While I appreciate the fact that the Board would pay attention to our publication, I have to wonder why it would feel so threatened that you should attempt to confront our story. Could it be that we're too close to the so-called target? (1) By not clearly defining the term "distributors," your rule would seem to include any poor sod with two VCRs and a working knowledge of the postal service. (2)&(3) Your explanations regarding T2 and Evil Dead hinge on the belief that releasing a cut film is in some way equivalent to releasing the film in its entirety. It's not. In fact, your specifics on cuts seem all the more damaging to your organization—as if you were bragging about it. Also, declaring that T2 was "heavily cut" and not simply passed by way of studio power is a questionable defense. (4) As films are judged as a whole, they can more easily be rejected for overall tone—in that specific cuts cannot be made for qualification. Bombs away!





# WE'RE NOT SORRY

**D**URING THE COURSE OF EXPANDING our vast empire of magazines and video distribution (and very soon film production) we've received a lot of criticism—most of which has taken the form of lowly personal attacks. Many of our so-called critics hail from the realm of irregularly produced xerox "fanzines"—the seedy depths in which we still have our roots—reeking of the petty envy and inbredness that occasionally passes for passionate beliefs.

Our general reaction is a simple, "Who cares?" Hey, we'd be bitter too if we'd grown up to become alcoholics who slaved away at a torturous, nowhere day job and spent countless hours on an invisible, pointless mishmash of contrived *angst*. Curiously though, they never criticize the magazines themselves, just the personalities involved—namely us.

One "editor" fitting this bill commented, "At the very least I hope Christian Gore is making a ton of money, because if you're gonna sell your ass in the marketplace, the least you can do is get a good price for it." Insightful words for someone working at a video rental store. We wonder, is his worth \$4.50 an hour?

Another, a chieving bootlegger moron who labeled us "holier-than-thou video Nazis," actually wasted a significant amount of breath in his 12-page pamphlet ranting about an error we made in the mail section of FTVG#6. (Our sincere apologies to Steve Puchalski for momentarily confusing him with Rev. Rick Sullivan.)

We didn't realize we mattered so much!

The fact that these aspirationless dolts would be so irritated by our activities to actually take the time and energy to attack us in print is probably more amusing to us than it is to their tiny circle of sycophantic readers.

Probably the only advice we'd have for these whiners is to stop ragging on us and concentrate on their respective little "hobby" publications. However, one thing we'd like to get straight is that **WE'RE NOT SORRY** that we struggled for eight years to make **FILM THREAT** and the **VIDEO GUIDE** successful.

We're also *not* sorry that—

- We're making enough money to move out of our respective parents' homes and pay our bills.
- We don't have to **STEAL** other people's hard work to remain solvent.
- We make legitimate mistakes.
- We risk the wrath of others in an effort to take a stand on something we believe.
- We manage to progress, change and evolve in order to survive.
- We give filmmakers a forum and a chance for others to discover their work.

We find it hilarious, it's great publicity and we love it that a jealous few feel the need to waste so much time and effort writing nasty things about us—thanks a lot and goodbye losers! (But keep up the good work!)

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

David E. Williams  
editor-in-chief  
FILM THREAT VIDEO GUIDE

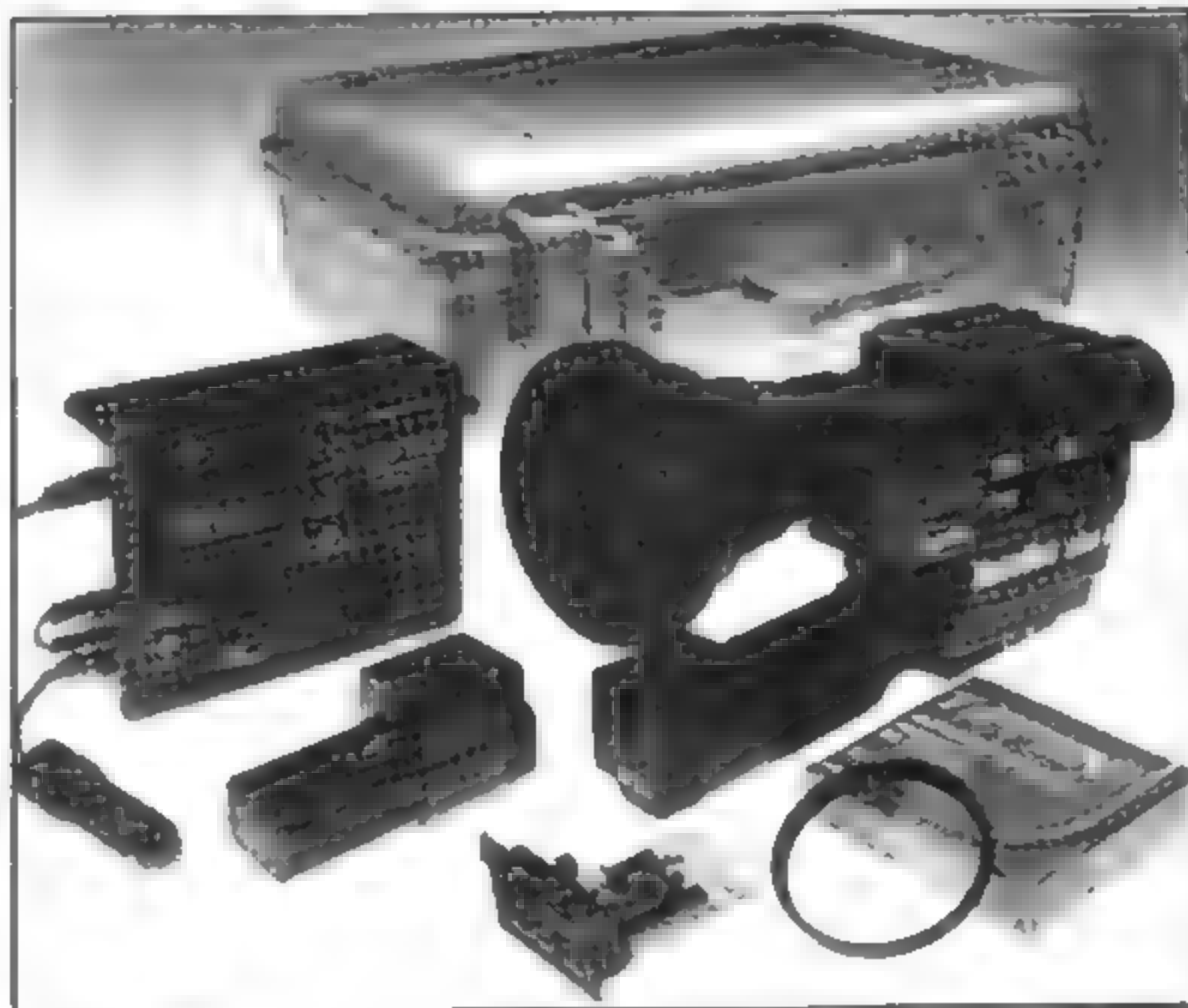
Christian Gore  
editor-in-chief  
FILM THREAT MAGAZINE



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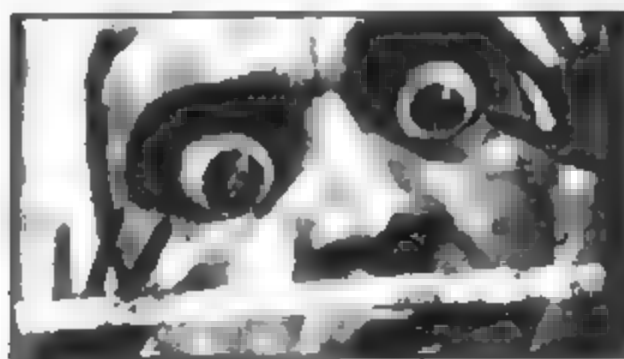
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# SCAN

*This month's review section is blazingly informative and should not be read in one sitting (unless it's a two-flusher).*

## HATED GG ALLIN & THE MURDER JUNKIES

60min/16mm

Skinny Nervous Guy Productions

Film Threat Video



The most frightening aspect of this insightful film is that punk icon GG Allin isn't revealed as yet another poser. He doesn't go home after a long night of shrieking inane lyrics, rolling around in broken glass and eating his own shit to greet a pleasant wife and watch the evening news. Nope, there's no picket fence wake-up call to Allin's phantasmagoric lifestyle—which documentarian Todd Phillips chronicles in sickening detail. Probably the last word on the subject—at least until GG finally makes good on his oft-made promise to off himself onstage—*Hated* delves deeply into the feces-smeared world of a human abomination. Allin, whose endomorphic



**HATED:** GG Allin's on stage rage is absolutely live and probably qualifies as unsafe sex.

physique boasts a roadmap of scar tissue derived from past performances, is the best possible argument for retroactive abortion—but how and from what did this creature evolve? Despite a brilliant blend of performance clips, interviews (with GG himself, his moronic brother/bandmate Merle, former high school buddies, teachers and assorted Allin followers) and witty narration, *Hated* draws few Darwinian conclusions, but clearly illustrates the outcome: A man unfettered society and with absolutely no regard for others. Freudians would explain Allin's raw, unmitigated rage by noting his remarkably tiny penis—but I'd be inclined to blame a bad gene pool (which would also explain Merle). In all, *Hated* is a must-have for Allin fans and detractors alike (a fact which obviously prompted filmmaker Phillips to invest in Macrovision anti-piracy encoding) and probably the best film I've seen so far this year. No fucking lie.

—David E. Williams

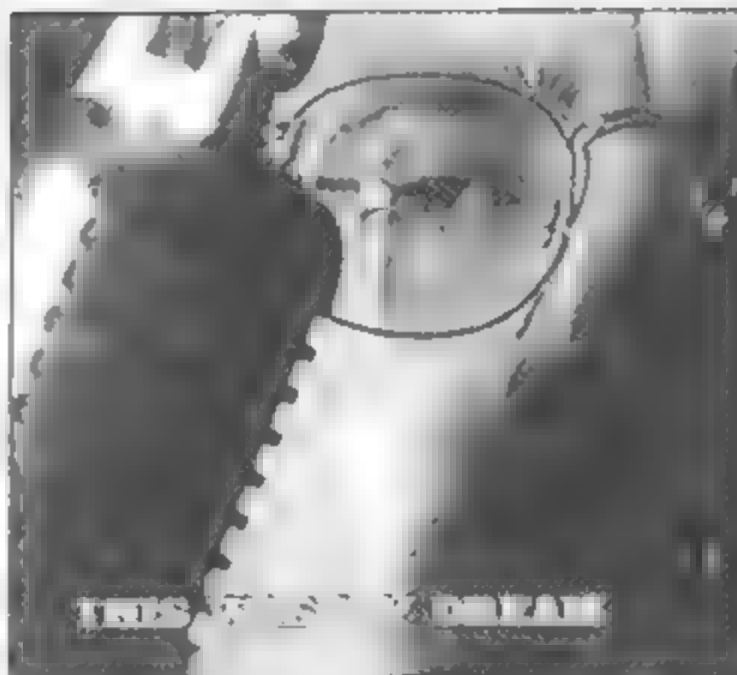


## My Vision

8min/Video & Super 8  
Rune Lind Productions



Rune Lind is just a sixteen-year-old punk kid, but he's also a talented filmmaker who works within his limits and range of experience. *My Vision*, though suffering from overly Lynchian imagery, is a thoughtful representation of a typical geek's hormone-drenched existence—cold economically in the form of a dream. While the hapless geek (John Wells) lusts longingly (and appropriately) over the form of a certain jailbait tart (Anna DeMauro), Lind cuts back and forth across shots of suitably viscous fluids, assorted high school hijinks and young cleavage. The resulting blur of unfulfilled sexual



**My Vision:** One part teen angst, two parts raging hormones makes for a curious film/video cocktail.

determination—culminating in an arresting, strobe-lit shot of DeMauro dancing lasciviously to some cheesy house mix—is the closest approximation to the pubescent male mentality I've recently seen. And like some bad flashback to my own teen days, during which I'd wander about in an



warns that he will soon be finished with another film—so let's see if the boy wonder survives the sophomore slump

—D.E.W.

## Tortured Soul

60min/Video

Nightmare Productions



What may very well be the nadir of white trash videos, *Tortured Soul* reeks with misogynistic porno attributes

insidiously disguised as lame slasher flick thematics. This type of buffoonery justifies a seven day waiting period after purchasing home video equipment. Rarely have I seen a T&A fest (and other female anatomy) padded with random driving sequences. It's usually the other way around.



PATENTED

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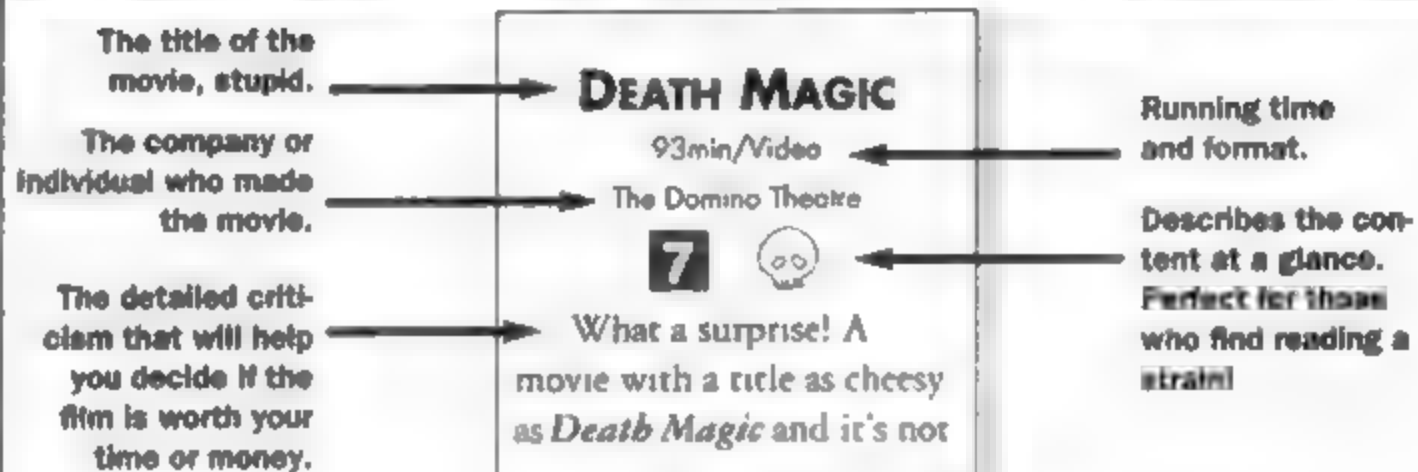
## RATINGS

- 10** Perfect! A must for any collection and worth twice the price!
- 9** Excellent. Definitely worth seeing.
- 8** Great. We're jealous and wish we'd thought of it.
- 7** Very Good. Would get the filmmaker an "A" at U.C.L.A.
- 6** Good. But not "very good." Wait until you have extra cash.
- 5** A few good scenes, but only at the 7-Eleven security-cam level.
- 4** Dull. But interesting at scan speed.
- 3** Trance-inducing. Not interesting, even at scan speed.
- 2** Bad. You have a new blank tape.
- 1** Sucks! No explanation necessary.

## CLASSIFICATIONS

No Budget	Horror	Action	Classic
Low Budget	Nudity	Subversive	Animated
Big Budget	Arty	Surreal	Sci-Fi
Comedy	Music	Documentary	Pop Culture
Drama	Music Video	Instructional	Compilation

## READING OUR REVIEWS





Nonetheless, Nightmare Productions could have simultaneously submitted *Tortured Soul* to FTVG and Saucy Jack's Amateur Porn Videos—but would ultimately leave both reviewers flaccidly disappointed. Not much to tell plot-wise, it's conveniently structured like those cheaply produced adult videos that give the real pornography industry a bad name: Negligee clad femmes autonomously arouse themselves for no apparent reason after which they are strangled, shot, disemboweled or whatever, depending on the idiosyncratic whims of the killer. Hence, the mildly convoluted premise unravels into nothing, including the "ironic" twist at the end, leaving sequel possibilities wide open. (God forbid *Tortured Soul 2: The T&A Continues*)

—Vince Digt

## MISTRESS OF THE RINGS

35min/Video

Det Danske Filmværksted



Fostered at the state-funded Danish Film Workshop in beautiful Copenhagen, Steen Shapiro's inside profile on body piercing is indeed a forward thinking use of tax dollars. Gracefully (and sometimes gruesomely) graphic in all respects, *Mistress of the Rings* humorously depicts the much maligned artform in all it's splendor. While I've never had the urge to puncture any of my own extremities, hostess/subject Mette Hintze is so seemingly smooth with a pair of forceps and a needle that I almost long for a quick (and painless) hop onto the modern primitive bandwagon. Noses, nipples and various genitalia fall prey to her deft fingers as she espouses her stainless steel



MISTRESS OF THE RINGS: Mette Hintze is the Danish master of modern primitive apparel.

loop-laden philosophies. Living in Los Angeles, most piercing devotees I encounter are brain-dead heavy metal morons—and from what *Mistress* depicts, this is pretty much the norm in Denmark. Fortunately though, Shapiro does well by shunning the trendies and allowing a true artist to speak her mind—albeit in Danish with English subs. Highly recommended to both the unscarred neophyte and the airport metal detector-hating veteran.

—D.E.W

## GLADIATOR

60min/Video

Visions Realized



Director Roberto Ruiz obviously understands the principles behind filmmaking fundamentals—especially in the video format—as demonstrated by this futuristic adventure. However, he lacks the elements of pacing and storytelling necessities, practically beating the viewer over the head with frustrating repetition. The 60 minutes presented here would have made for a

much more entertaining 25 to 30 minute short. Regardless, this sci-fi experience appears suitable for the Ninja Turtles generation and their overly cautious mothers. The story is your basic hero/family man pursuing the heinous individuals that destroyed his life. A hybrid of Luke Skywalker's teenage appearance and Mad Max's vengeful mentality, our hero battles evil forces to avenge his wife's death and son's kidnapping. Sure, it's one colossal cliché after another, I still can't help but admire the time and energy that went into this low budget spectacle. So simple is the plot that Ruiz left out dialogue, any dialogue, opting for subtle visuals to move the scheme along. While this weeded out any embarrassingly bad acting, it got old real fast as my thumb depressed the scan button. This muted style continued all the way to the unexpected, yet not surprising, conclusion, revealing the video game twist and the immortal game life of our hero. Kudos for much of the miniature effects and the somewhat effective forced perspective shots. Snappy editing

and inspired fight scenes helped make *Gladiator* more bearable than most. Visions Realized, Ruiz's production company, does indeed seem to have a visionary direction.

—Chris O'Flaherty

## BABY, I'M A WEREWOLF

20min/16mm

Alfredo E. Rodriguez



For a first film, this isn't too bad an effort by director Rodriguez—but it's not that great either. The Plot: Alfred Lupine, an aspiring filmmaker (so defined by his girlfriend and not by anything we actually see in the film) stumbles upon a mutilated body in a New Jersey park. While examining the bloody stiff, he's attacked by an unseen assailant—who later turns out to be a werewolf (of course). Following the standard lycanthrope mythology, Lupine must destroy his attacker to lift the shape-shifting curse from himself so he can resume his New Jerseyite, aspiring filmmaker lifestyle. *An American Werewolf in*





QUEEN OF THE B-PICTURE, MONIQUE GABRIELLE (BACHELOR PARTY, NOT MOVIES, IMMATURE Y) STARS IN HER FIRST, NEVER BEFORE RELEASED FILM, IT'S HARD BLADING IT AT THE TOP. A STORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL, BARS AND F-STOPS GONE WILD FROM MATTHEW PRODUCTIONS. \$19.99 (SHIPPING & GLUE ON THE ONLY. SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO MATTHEW ENTERTAINMENT CORP., 888 W. LANCASTER BLVD., DEVON, PA 19333)



Semi-pro gore effects help lift **VAMPIRES AND OTHER STEREOTYPES** out of complete worthlessness.

that quality cable access programming would spawn from deep in the south of Georgia? Producer, director Kienzle has submitted the first season of his weekly half-hour cable gig, Neo Optimum Television Viewing. Don't be turned off by the "cable access" element, because these video's are highly entertaining for the most part. Relying heavily on post-production effects, talented video artists and musicians, NOTV's compilation is chock-full o' tasty visuals and amusing snippets. A piece titled "Urban Folklore" examines a coke addict's plunge into paranoia—rotting out his drug induced brain. This unintentional anti-drug message works without a public service announcement's moronic involvement. Dandelion Wine's video for their memorable tune "Seeds," a rockin' surf instrumental, and Roy G Biv's repetitiously annoying "Ain't So Dangerous" covers the mandatory music video portion of NOTV's lineup. Throw in a pseudo-commercial for Death Rock (featuring a Pee Wee Herman/Robert

Smith of the Cure hybrid) and a couple of bizarre video art clips, and you get NOTV's well rounded aura. With the Video Toaster revolution upon us, and the growing availability of cable, NOTV may have a head start on the competition.

—C.O.

London did it better and *Curse of the Queerwolf* did it funnier, but Rodriguez managed to finish something watchable—despite hokey effects and suspect technical work.

—Merle Bertrand

## VAMPIRES AND OTHER STEREOTYPES

80min/Video

Brimstone Productions



Like Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead 2* (the film it most obviously resembles) this gross-out comedy is funny on several levels (but succeeds best at the unintentional) as a trio of Amy Fisher-types and their Jersey Shore beau battle demons, zombies and (yes) vampires to save the world from Satan. Small-scale violence quickly

ensues, and the grue flows freely amidst dumb blonde gags and ludicrous dialogue as the apparently methadone-addled cast staggers through each effects sequence. Unique to this feature effort is the curious blue glow that accompanies the scenes set in Hell, though that may be more indicative of my cultural expectations than any fault of writer/producer/director Kevin Lindemuth—who appears briefly in the film as the Swamp Monster.

—D.E.W.

## NOTV

50min/Video

Michael Kienzle Productions



Who would have thought

## DAVID "THE ROCK" NELSON'S VIDEO MOVIE SHORTS-VOL. 1

3hrs 40min/8mm Video

David Nelson Productions



"If you can't say something nice," the cliché goes, "don't say anything at all." Sounds good logically, but realistically this mag, and hordes of others, would be 2% text treading in a sea of photos captioned with candy coated catch phrases. Honesty is, and shall remain, the best policy. Case in point: *David "The Rock" Nelson's Video Movie Shorts - Vol. 1*. This 3 hour and 40 minute opus compiles sketch after sketch of tediously long, unintentionally funny, in-camera-editing type shorts.



"Frankenstein vs. Sodom Insane," "Dracula vs. Sodom Insane," "Wolfman vs. ...," etc. Ten minutes into it, the point is clear that Nelson wants to get as much mileage as possible out of his Saddam Hussein novelty mask. Occasionally, he departs from this obsession with something he calls "monster/horror/comedies," but they too, disintegrate Scud-like under this reviewer's Patriot glare. These innocuous films (I use the term loosely) may entertain the in-laws at Thanksgiving, but they hardly stand up outside of "The Rock's" little world. The highlight of this self-indulgent fiasco is Nelson's constant ramblings about his boxing titles and trophies—including three decades of Chicago's Golden Gloves. This egomaniac continues throughout with "The Rock's" moniker splattered everywhere (with the words "filmed, produced, edited, written and directed by David 'The Rock' Nelson following each and every piece). "I hope you thought my movie was stupid," he confesses at one point, "cause it was supposed to be stupid." I wish I'd had this information before I watched the fuckin' thing...

—V D

## THE FRIEDMAN CAT

22min/16mm

Aaron Productions



Director David B. Sharp has uncorked an insidiously twisted little film! Stan & Julie Friedman (Brad Peterson and Brenda Ballard respectively in very solid performances), and their whining, flu-ridden son form a typically dysfunctional suburban family of the 90s. The only apparent "normal" member of the family is their cat (seen as a charmingly



ABOVE: THE FRIEDMAN CAT will inspire while THE ANTICHRIST (RIGHT) drowns in excessive EXORCIST sampling.

dorky puppet). We spend the majority of the first 17-18 minutes of this film observing a day in the life of this daffy family from the cat's point of view, a la David Letterman-like "Cat-Cam." The surprising thing is this gimmick actually contributes a sense of rising tension since throughout the movie, the cat is either being tormented by a bratty neighbor kid or its the focus of several misadventures—such as eating the main course for the night's dinner party or shredding the bitchy guest's dress. So you know *something's* eventually gonna happen. You just don't know what or when—which makes the last 3-4 minutes of this film so completely unexpected and what also makes this a good movie. I'm not gonna tell you what happens 'cause I don't want to ruin it...

—M B

## THE ANTI-CHRIST

85min/16mm

Talisman Pictures



Eschewing such decidedly American horror elements as hockey-masked sociopaths, transplanted French filmmaker



Guy Bodart relies instead on the Old World charms of demonic possession, exorcism and gravelly voices played backwards to elicit cheap scares. Though it closely parallels that superior Catholic wet dream *The Exorcist*, this feature effort is highly entertaining in its blatant recycling of that pea soup-spewing classic. The trouble starts when an overly-active geniatric *padre* discovers a demonic icon in the Middle East—so it only stands to reason that 25 years later (according to the intertitle) Satan begins stalking a blonde, Rubenesque beauty (played by Lorelei Lanford) as she plays frisbee with her mother in a downtown Las Vegas park. (Okay, but just roll with it.) Soon, our pert beauty is convulsing in bed with white clown make-up all over her face

and her voice oscillating with more reverb effects than Ozzy Osbourne's during his last farewell concert. The subsequent exorcism is relatively uneventful and ultimately unsuccessful—making the ending a welcome downer as our pasty-faced Incubus-incubator offs the priest in a shower of blood.

17  
—D E. W

## PUKE

84min/Video

Ol' Bait Shop Productions



The capsule description accompanying this film makes it sound unrelentingly depressing and somber. "A good high school student turns to booze and drugs after being abused by his parents. He makes life unbearable for

# STILL FRAME

## DETACHABLE PENIS

### WHAT MTV WON'T LET YOU SEE

When the group King Missile wanted a video for their song "Detachable Penis," they turned to High Risk Productions and Richard Kern—who focused on the tune's phallic star and even budgeted \$100 for a massive strap-on version.



**Kern and the missing missile.**

The result is an entertaining clip highlighted by a leather-clad vixen manipulating the aforementioned monstrous rubber dong. Neither Atlantic Records nor MTV were thrilled with the video's frank lyrics and latex third legs—demanding the clip be gelded as to protect the innocent (and presumably humorless). **[FVG]**



**1** Completely clipped is this black leather-clad babe with the threatening appendage.



**2** Frontman John Hall ponders the fate of his foot-long frank. The shot was later cropped.

friends that try to help him. Based on a true story." Jeez, it sounds like an after-school special. I didn't review this film for a good two weeks because it sounded so gloomy, which is too bad, because the tape isn't really like that. Instead of the expected series of overacted confrontation/crisis scenes surrounding the hero's abuses and addictions, we follow the story of Mike, or "Puke" as his friends call him (for just the reason the name suggests). Puke (Ian Faith, in a very versatile and solid performance), starts out as a clean-cut guy with a

cute girlfriend on his way to a college education—but ends up literally jerking off an insane asylum attendant as a bribe so he can escape with his heroin-addicted girlfriend to beg for loose change on the streets of Middleboro, MA. Actually, there's much more that happens both before and after all that, which we see either as it happens or as it's told to us by the other characters in the tape in pseudo-documentary style interviews—but you get an idea of the flavor of events. The shot-on-video format and cheesy video effects distract in general—a problem exacerbated by shaky camera work, (even just a tripod would take some of the amateurish edge off things)—and a number of long scenes consisting of only one medium or long shot with no intercutting undermine the tape somewhat, but these criticisms are also compliments in a way. Since producer/director Andrew Osborne has managed to make what sounded like such an unappealing plot line into an engaging video, it made me want the technical stuff to be up to par. Making the viewer care is usually half the battle.

—M.B.



**PUKE:** You can't judge a book by its completely unappealing cover.

acy to kill JFK and now he's about to spill his guts to the world—if he can live long enough to testify. While this may sound like a premise that's enticing enough for Hollywood to jump on (and screw up), director Dennis Duggan wasn't quite able to string it all together in this attempt he must have fished out of the archives (judging from the 1976 copyright date). There are a number of reasons why *Endangered Species* doesn't work. The densely convoluted plot has Dismus coerced into having himself cloned in order to insure that, even in the event of his death, his memories will live on. This mode of defense is more than implausible—and if a film is going to hinge on science, the science better damn well be accurate—making it a fatal plot flaw. Curiously, according to the propaganda submitted with the tape, alternate cuts of the film range from 140 minutes to 90 minutes. Could the trim down to a mere 45 have resulted in the storyline chaos I encountered? Aside from these problems, the video transfer—taped directly off a wall—makes the film nearly unwatchable. A warning to those contemplating submitting their films: You never get another chance to make a first impression. Don't send a shitty copy of part of your film to be reviewed. All we can judge is what we see—and I didn't see much I liked in *Species*.

M.B.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES

45min/Super 8

Cinefinity Films



Frank Dismus was part of the conspir-



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# MINI INTERVIEW

## DON MURPHY: The Big-Shot

Three years ago, he couldn't get a phone call returned—now he's evolved from a pissed-upon nobody to an all-powerful Hollywood producer!

By John Thomas and Rowdy Yates

**D**ON MURPHY LOOKS EXACTLY like what he is—a USC graduate in a suit. As we join him, he is currently in deep "conversation" with an associate on the telephone.

"I'm not getting angry at you—I'm just trying to figure out what planet you're coming from!" Murphy intones with barely concealed disgust.

His place of business, an insect-ridden joint run by an Italian slumlord is hardly the place you would imagine finding the co-producer of the next \$40 million budget Oliver Stone film—the Quentin Tarantino-penned *Natural Born Killers*. In fact, Murphy hardly looks like a producer at all.

After finishing this seemingly intense call, Murphy proceeds to tell us his favorite story: The making of his 35mm, feature length, \$50,000 budgeted USC thesis film, *Monday Morning* (aka *Class of Fear*). With this in mind, here's some of Murphy's advice on getting a feature film produced for almost next to nothing:

**ENROLL IN FILM SCHOOL** As you have wisely surrounded yourself with people desperate to get into filmmaking, take full advantage of them. If anyone is stupid enough to say, "Hey, I have an uncle who would let me use his Ferrari," don't be ashamed to accept.

**PLAN IN ADVANCE** Repeatedly brag to everyone that you are "making a film." Continue this practice until you will be completely humiliated if the project does not begin according to your specifically stated timetable—encouraging you to avoid costly procrastination.

**SCAM, SCAM, SCAM** By ruthlessly exploiting your "student" status, negotiate deals for free (or substantially reduced) camera rental, stock and processing and other necessities. Even on *Monday Morning*, they were able to get product placement. Certain companies kicked in cost-defraying items for a few seconds of screen time. Just call—they want the exposure.

**LIVE IN THE EDITING ROOM** Why waste precious dollars on renting an apartment when there's an 8X12 foot room at your 24 hour disposal—and so close to work? Murphy, who lived in his editing room at Universal for seven months, found it to be a great way to "guilt" people into working for free.

**REMEMBER, YOU'RE IN CHARGE** Avoid countless headaches by not surrounding yourself with "producer wannabes." Make sure that you and only you are in charge. Just find someone stupid enough to handle all the financial woes for a "Production Manager" credit—therefore insuring that you have full creative and financial control.

After successfully selling his film to Fox/Lorber Ent. (where it turned a profit), Murphy and partner of three years Jane Hamsher are not only the producers of *Natural Born Killers*, but are preparing *From Dusk Till Dawn* (to be directed by Robert Kurtzman of KNB EFX) and *Ginger Snaps* (to be directed by Peter Fonda) going into production later this year. Curiously, they are also real human beings and not the stuck-up snobs you'd expect. **(FYI)**

Jane Hamsher



Producer Don Murphy in action.

## BUSHJOCKEY

15min/16mm (found footage)

With Mills



After watching *Bushjockey*, I found myself contemplating an old argument: if you use a jet engine to splatter paint on a canvas, are you creating art, or just an impersonal, randomly created pattern? According to director Wilt Mills, this film is "an attempt to express emotion with film as a painter does with paint, or as a musician does with music." Uh-oh. I could hear the ol' jet engine whine to life as I popped this tape in my VCR. Granted, unless Mills just threw his footage in a bag and cut and spliced at random, *Bushjockey*, unlike a jet engine painting, should at least be considered art. But while that may be so, well, to paraphrase another Bush—I just don't get it. What Mills seems to have forgotten or ignored is that painters and musicians almost always project a story or at least a dramatic flow into their work. This film does neither. And without a story or at least a theme, it simply comes across as a masturbatory fifteen minute montage of randomly generated imagery. My other big problem with *Bushjockey* was that for a "found footage" film, it seemed that all the footage was found in the same old industrial film! There were way too many repeated shots and parts of shots. (The Bigelow Corporation is featured so prominently in this film, it should be paying an endorsement fee to the filmmaker!) In other words, it may look kinda cool, but it just doesn't mean a hell of a lot.

—M.B.





L to R: Terek Puckett and director/costar Jim Van Bebber are just two of the horrific images in *MY SWEET SATAN*.



Moronic, Harley-riding, idiot Southerners account for most of the *UNPLEASANTNESS*.

## MY SWEET SATAN

22min/16mm

Asmodeus/Mercury Films

Tempe Video



This gritty and horrifying short from director Jim Van Bebber (creator of the also brilliant *Deadbeat At Dawn* feature and *Roadkill* short) deal with the by-now-infamous deeds of Ricky Kasso (played by Van Bebber), the Northport metalhead teen (and cartoon Satanist) who killed another kid for "Satan" and then hanged himself in prison. As a portrait of small-town *ennui* and codified rebellion ("Everybody's always high or workin' on gettin' high...everybody hates everybody for no reason...nobody has any ideas or ambitions...") *My Sweet Satan* paints a more convincing picture of teen frustration and spiralling psychoactive psychosis in twenty-two minutes than David St. Clair did in a couple of hundred pages in his sadly sensationalistic (and sadly written) literary account of the same case, *Say You Love Satan*. Van Bebber pulls no sanguinary punches, so if you're squeamish, the murder scene will have you, well...squeaming with its ultra-graphic execution. The next effort from this talented celluloid manipulator from Ohio is to be the ulti-

mate Charlie Manson film, *Charlie's Family*, which promises to be another no-bullshit account of wacky reality. Charlie fan(atic)s should start carving "X"s into their foreheads now and prepare to be creepy-crawled.

—Graham Rae

## THE GREAT UNPLEASANTNESS

80min/16mm

Crescent Pictures



What should I expect from North Carolina-based filmmaker Dorne Pentes (*Confessions of a Southern Punk*) but another large dollop of Generation X angst? Errol and Isabel are pierced, bitchy, urbanesque twentysomethings in love—trapped in a world infested with beer-swilling wifebeaters, stereotypically hick white trash and ruthless developers plotting to yuppify their quasi-rural existence. On top of that, what's a disenfranchised alternative couple to do when they can't keep a job, pay the rent or deal with the aftermath of troubled childhoods? Man, who the fuck knows! (Having a nose ring in the Deep South *can* cause some major problems.) But directorman Dorne somehow manages to keep the lid

on this boiling pot of domestic disasters. The acting is uniformly good—an essential element in such fare—but the real star is Mike McNeely's cinematography. Despite making due with what seems to be mostly natural light, *Unpleasantness* plays without the annoying absence of detail inherent to low budget films. Combined with clever writing and a bit of passion, this and other technical attributes add up to a film well worth having. Another score for rabble-rousing Dorne.

—D.E.W.

## TORTURED OBSESSION

90min/Video

Kickit Filmworks



Here we go again with the "torture" motif, a straight-to-video quickie that dares to answer the question, "How many titties does a great video make?" Apparently not enough. Like its counter-part *Tortured Soul*, *Tortured Obsession* delves into the mind of a madman. It comes across, however, as a day-in-the-life of an impotent security guard longing to suckle on his mama's teat. Although

technically and creatively superior than *T.S., T.O.* still lacks the motivation and desire to be taken seriously. Instead of *just* hiring non-acting friends, *Obsession* does this plus achieves decent lighting, competent editing and a plausible score. A slickly polished video box also elevates it to a higher level of credibility, and possibly even a shot at some Blockbuster shelf space. (Oh, joy!) This, of course, stimulates the question, "How slick a video box does a great video make?" What ever the answer, *Tortured Obsession* has a long way to go.

—V.D.

## BACK FROM HELL

82min/Super 8

Koshmir Motion Pictures



Yuck! Pyew! Blech! I like films made by independent filmmakers as much as the next guy, but what I don't like is a micro budget flick that blatantly attempts to mimic its bigger-budgeted cousins. That's what the makers of *Back From Hell* attempt, and the film fails badly because of it. The movie starts with a Priest going to hear the con-

# IN THE WORKS

*The first word on upcoming films*



An incredibly impressive behind-the-scenes shot from *ANGEL OF DEATH*.

## ANGEL OF DEATH

Acerbic *Oriental Cinema* editor-in-chief Damon Foster (*Hot Dogs On the Run*) returns to making his own kung-fu comedies with *Angel of Death*, a cartoon-like homage to the Asian trash films he loves so dearly. Though we'd have to wonder where he finds time between issues of his dense-as-lead publication (chock full of super-opinionated ramblings about Jackie Chan, Ultra Man, Tsui Hark, John Woo, Godzilla and a multitude of others), we have to hand it to him for putting his money where his mouth is.

## OZONE

Director J.R. Bookwalter (*The Dead Next Door*, *Robot Ninja*) offers mutations and transformation à la *Frankenbooker* as the new drug "ozone" hits the streets in his new horror effort. Incorporating Amiga computer effects and a plethora of impressive make-up magic, the film looks to be his most interesting since his *Next Door* days. The trailer—featuring plenty of gore and the improved Filmlook process—promises a lot, so let's hope he delivers. **[FTV]**



Eddie (James Black) detects mutant murders in *OZONE*.



**BACK FROM HELL:** Abdominal wounds abound in this lack-luster attempt at emulating the majors.

fession of an old friend he hasn't seen in over 8 years, "...since I found God and he found Hollywood." It seems this fine young man wanted to become an actor and felt like he was failing. Apparently unwilling to get a job as a waiter like any other respectable actor-wannabe, this guy goes straight to Satan and sells his soul for success.

The only catch is, he hasn't fulfilled his end of the bargain by making the required two human sacrifices in the Devil's name. Ol' Beelzebub gets a little pissed about this slight breach of contract and saddles our friend with a curse: Anybody who looks him in the eyes suddenly wants to kill him (except the Priest, who's immune because he's a man of God). As if this mess isn't confusing enough, he then uses magic hazmahaz to reanimate a would-be assassin he bumped off and learns that Satan has launched a plan to take over the world. Oh! (Not that we ever see any of this subplot.) The two main characters just talk about how horrible everything must be "...out there." Lots of talking interrupted by gobs of childish, blood-gushing killings, and lame fight scenes ensue. Not to mention the wooden acting, all filmed in the same

"we-have-just-enough-light-to-get-an-exposure...barely" lighting style. I respect anyone who goes through the hell of completing a feature, especially one shot on film, but that doesn't mean the finished product itself is necessarily good. And in the case of *Back From Hell*, that holds doubly true

—M.B.

## SMOKE CRAZY

42min/Video

Jailhouse Tattoo Productions



The makers of this video deserve some credit for pulling off a fairly professional looking (by public access standards)



**SMOKE CRAZY:** Some low-budget laughs.



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hort feature with a budget of less than \$300. Had the video actually been entertaining, they would have deserved more. *Smoke Crazy* is really nothing more than a thinly veiled clone of the 1930s anti-marijuana propaganda film, *Reefer Madness*, whose budget at the time was probably less than that of this film. It's about an upstanding young girl—"let's call her Mary," (or better yet, Hatchet Face) narrates the portly Dr. Emil Rojas—who is led down the road to ruin by the demon

Nicotine. The video has all the trappings of a good parody, less one—the punch line. The premise is ridiculous enough, but there's just nothing in it that's really all that funny. Most of the cast (in mock-homage to beatniks) stumbles around banging bongos and babbling inanities like, "I am a mouth drinking, drinking, drink, drank drunk, I thunk. How can we bear to care with all the war, all the world, are you aware, beware, aware?" Whether stuff like this was written by the video's makers

(North Carolinians Brian Rainey and David George) or likes of Kerouac, Bukowski or any of the other writers the characters in *Smoke Crazy* cite, it still sucks. Perhaps this sounded like a good idea at one time to someone, but then again, so did *Ishtar*, *Hudson Hawk* and Jean-Claude Van Damme's acting career.

—Spiney Norman

## GOROTICA

60min/Video

Ill-Tex Productions



If you're a warped, sicko necrophile/gore fan and you also like homemade soft porn, then chances are you'll want this flick for your collection. Opening with one of our main characters, Carrie, feverishly masturbating to the adorably sick *Death Scenes* flashing across her TV, you'll immediately want to settle in with your sex toys and a six pack. The acting was very poor in moments, but only poor through the rest of the film. The editing made me drift out a little, but before I could get distracted, the scenes of debauchery would return. The supporting characters in this hour of clam bumpin', muffin stuffin', knock-off are your good 'ol hardcore-punk-trance types (wearing black of course) without a floundering clue in life, but because of that they are fairly believable. I must tell all you FTVG readers that my favorite character in this film was Max. The guy really loved his part and it showed! How would you like to have a part where all you do is lie around and get humped by a big-breasted, trance-vamp, sicko chick with a shaved box?!!?! Overall, I liked *Gorotica* because I like the no-budget death film genre—they're fun—but I felt a famil-

arly sadistic giggle wash over me as the storyline unfolded. The similarities between *Gorotica* and Jorg Buttgeret's *Nekromantik* films became rather disappointing—prompting me to think writer/producer/director (And *Dracula* magazine editor) Hugh Gallagher could have been a bit more independently creative

—C.J. LaPage

## HEAVEN

45min/16mm

Entropy Films



Here's a fairly slick-looking featurette from German filmmaker Robert Schwentke about a "psychological cat and mouse game" that follows a botched mob heist. The players are Ced, the driver of the getaway car, and Nick, an odd and fanatical desert-dwelling, can-collecting trailer hermit who nurses the wounded Ced and steals his \$20,000 booty. The film was shot in 8 days on a relatively big budget (roughly \$60,000) in Los Angeles and the Mojave Desert with a crew and staff of 20. The production is competent, but ultimately seems too short to effectively tell the story (this would have been better geared for feature-length). Due to the film's brevity, the cast (all SAG members) is not allowed to fully prove that they are real actors. Also, the film, after getting off to a quick and violent start (complete with slow-mo death scenes that would make Sam Peckinpah proud), *Heaven* becomes a relatively slow psychological drama—playing like a Harold Pinter play (How's that for an obscure reference?) and leaving one wanting more. Here's one to hoping that there's a longer



and more complete "Director's Cut" that has yet to surface.

—S.N.

## DEAD IS DEAD

80min/Video

Video Outlaw



From the first frame, *Dead Is Dead* reeked of cheesiness. Granted, writer/director/editor/star Mike Stanley is not a professional, but still, his short-on-video feature *Dead* is a dud (sorry, but that was just too easy to pass up). The plot concerns a man named Eric (Stanley) who is attacked by a mutant creature that tears his arm off and leaves him for dead. He is later found in the woods by a beautiful young woman named Laura (Traci Lords clone Connie Cocquyt) who gives him an exper-

imental drug called Dexitol, which grows his arm back. The drug can also revive the dead and becomes an entrepreneurial commodity. The video is poorly lit, and the sound is bad, too. The score sounds like not much more than a Casio or Yamaha, played by someone with a basic musical knowledge, but since the video's budget was somewhere around \$9,000, the London Philharmonic (or even Philip Glass) is not expected. The cast, reportedly culled from Tom Stanley's (presumably public access) television show, *Tales From Beyond*, are nearly devoid of emotion, but often amusing to watch as they babble ridiculous dialog and lumber about. Surreptitiously racked onto the end of the tape is a program called *The B's Nest Video Magazine*, a shameless copy of Full Moon's *Videozone*—right down to the



DEAD IS DEAD: It reeked of cheesiness from the first frame—and you can probably see why.

## Richard Newton's small white house

"Features the lingering odor of a kinkiness that's probably far more normal than most people would admit outside their bedrooms."

- David E. Williams, *FILM THREAT*

"Bataille meets L.A., splattered with cartons of raw eggs."

- Manohla Dargis, *The Village Voice*

"**small white house** is my idea of pornography."

- Helen Knodel, *L.A. Weekly*

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pathetic merchandising plug (as if Full Moon is worthy of emulation). I was surprised to find that the man behind this deed is J.R. Bookwalter, the director of the superb Super 8 zombie epic, *The Dead Next*

This "expressionistic fable" from young New York filmmaker Sascha Paladino is about a man who literally bottles up his fear every time he encounters a fearful situation. During one, however, he is

unable to open the bottle and it accidentally breaks, thus unleashing all his fears, which overwhelm him. The silent black-and-white short runs four minutes in length, and is over before an opinion can be formed. I have no choice but to leave it at that (the S signifies my neutrality) and tell young Sascha to keep at it and save his money for more film stock next time 'round.

—S.N.

## THE MAN WHO PUT HIS FEAR IN A BOTTLE

4min/Super 8

Young Pictures



How can a film so short be long enough to warrant either a good or a bad review?

Door. Previews for upcoming Video Outlaw releases like *The Zombie Army* and *Shreck* were highlighted, as well as an interview with the Tupperware-coiffed Mr. Stanley. *Dead Is Dead* is a good try, but ultimately pointless.

—S.N.

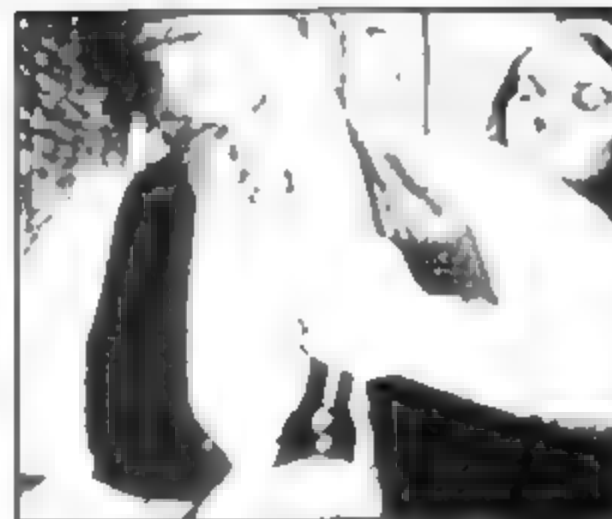
## THE ROUTE

12min/Super 8

A Brian Pyles Film



Lawrence Tierney (*Red*) stars as a sickly millionaire distraught over his doctor's (Conrad Brooks) terminal prognosis. A stranger soon emerges, offering the dying grump a serum that will keep him happily among the living. Or will it? This premise riddles itself full of holes, mainly because of Pyles' lack of production values. The hastily thrown together shoot plays out like an SNL skit—all the way down to the off-camera cue cards Brooks and Tierney seem to stare at. Probably the most annoying element, however, is the overbearing classical soundtrack (public domain, no doubt) that nearly drowns out the stiff dialogue. And, believe it or not, I was forgiving even past the uninspired ending, until Tierney (as himself) praises legendary directors, lumping in Pyles' incongruous name. Arrogant, or just for fun, I can't say. But it is a shame that a few hundred dollars and more time could have placed these Hollywood veterans in a more favorable spotlight than presented here. Curiously, on the same tape as *The Route* is an interview



FEAR IN A BOTTLE: Too short for too many words.

with Brooks honoring the late Ed Wood and a 1948-vintage Wood 16mm film. This part will undoubtedly be of interest to Ed Wood fans, but it is still too little and way too late.

—C.O.

## MIMICS/DREAM PARASITE/TRANSCIVER

55min/16mm

Merry Dinosaur Productions



Finally—a compilation tape with no outright sucky parts. This one, featuring three short films by New York filmmakers Jim Rider and Paul L'rmson, was a pleasure to watch. All three segments incorporate sound in effective ways. The first, *Mimics* (29min.), is about a musician who becomes obsessed with the sounds emanating from the apartment of the mysterious codger who lives upstairs. *Dream Parasite* (15min.) is an eerie (Pardon the cliché!) Kafkaesque tale of a young man whose dreams are stolen from him. The last, *Transceiver* (10min.), is about a man who is driven to the brink by strange radio signals he picks up through the metal plate in his head. All three films are skillfully shot and look and sound very good. The soundtrack of *Mimics*, by Boston-based musician Roger Miller, is captivating. The



MIMICS: Finally, an anthology film with no sucky parts.





FILM POEMS are supposed mood-piece masterpieces.

film also features some rather nifty stop-motion animation and nice creature effects. The bizarre and meticulous alternate universe in the black and white *Dream Parasite* is reminiscent of a *Brazil*-type world (I am barred by Editorial Law to allude to David Lynch's *Eraserhead*). Although *Transceiver* suffers from a blatantly cheesy monster (it looks like a big windsock with strings) it was still good. The scripting throughout the tape is intelligent and funny, helping make this compilation tape even and very enjoyable. If you don't mind, Jim and Paul, I'd like to keep this one.

—S.N.

## FILM POEMS

40min/Super 8  
West End Editorial



If making the camera jitter uncontrollably on purpose is art, then this collection of five "mood" films is a masterpiece. According to the accompanying press release, Timothy Cahill incorporates super-cheap techniques (i.e., splicing film with Scotch tape and stepping on the stock *ala* Woody [Zelig] Allen) to achieve "avante-garde" effects. Well, that's cool and everything, but that doesn't excuse the infinite repetition of said

process to the point of boredom. What most of these well-made, non-narrative entries boil down to are loops of familiar footage (nostalgic beauty queen contestants, kids on swings, gritty subways, etc.) excessively looped together over some mostly provocative music. Perhaps the best short, titled "Another 3 Minutes or So..." and starring the filmmaker's wife, stands out because most of the action is non-repeating and feels personal in tone. Ultimately, the end results are catchy, color-diffused videos for sophisticated urban professionals—a vacuous and self-important accomplishment at best.

—G.A.

## SEX BEAT

11min/B&W/Super 8  
Nova Eye Productions



*Sex Beat* is an often funny and intriguing short examining the daily effects of media-expelled sensuality. Either that, or it's a porno that makes you think while you're making a mess in your underwear. The film follows our sex-shocked protagonist through a series of titillating tests and everyday temptations that culminate in a desensitized, organ-oriented view of the world: He eventually sees his fellow co-workers

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merely as penises or breasts. No movie about the power of subliminal messages would be complete without the appearances of cute cancer stick whore Joe Camel, bikini-filled Coors beer commercials or split-second nasty shots of various hard-core images. Add an alluring nude dancer and a victimized blow-up doll to the stew and you have a thought-provoking mini-movie with plenty of skin. The ultimate indicator, however, seems to be whether or not the message is so compelling that it prevents the horny viewer from partaking in cheap, solo-arousal participation. In this particular case, the answer is no.

—G.A.

### SAMURAI VAMPIRE BIKERS FROM HELL

60min/Video

No Mercy Productions



Another ambitiously presented adventure that would need a Hollywood budget to do its title justice. The story has something to do with hell, ancient vampires and lots of tartly-dressed babes. You see, these 1000-year-old samurai vamps have ascended to earth, seeking virgin blood and a whole lot more. Alexander Hell, a *Blade Runner*-type bounty hunter and kick-butt swordsman, is hired to find them and cast their souls back down to the fiery depths below. This simple premise becomes confusing when additional characters enter, cluttering up the plot—numerous cohorts who party, ride Harleys and relentlessly battle each other. Besides the novice acting, weak script and

wannabe-Troma title, the three rules of business real estate should also apply here: Location, location, location. The gates of hell are nothing more than an office doorway guarded by a couple of inept ninja types; a large warehouse dubs as a "castle," and so on—abandoning any possibility of creativity. Probably the most disconcerting thing about *S.V.B.F.H.* is its subheading, "Chapter 1", indicating future adventures. Maybe *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* wasn't so bad after all

C.O.

### VINNY—THE LIFE AND TIMES OF VINCENT VAN GOGH

25min/Video



If there's any artist who deserves to be encapsulated in

the relatively moneyless, short-on-video medium, it's Vincent Van Gogh. This depressed, lonely, kind-of-crazy, but nevertheless lovable loser best represents many of today's independent filmmakers: Hard-working, not-so-famous, borderline psychotic auteurs who can't get any credit or recognition without resorting to self-mutilation and/or institutionalization. So far as we know, writer/director Huston Huddleston has both his ears intact, but his video about the trials and tribulations of Van Gogh does entail some of the necessary out-of-whack verve in places where it lacks big production values. Mostly hit-and-miss, the action is told through anecdotes by "acquaintances" of old Vinny (as his few friends called him). How much you enjoy this tape will depend on your interest in

# CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

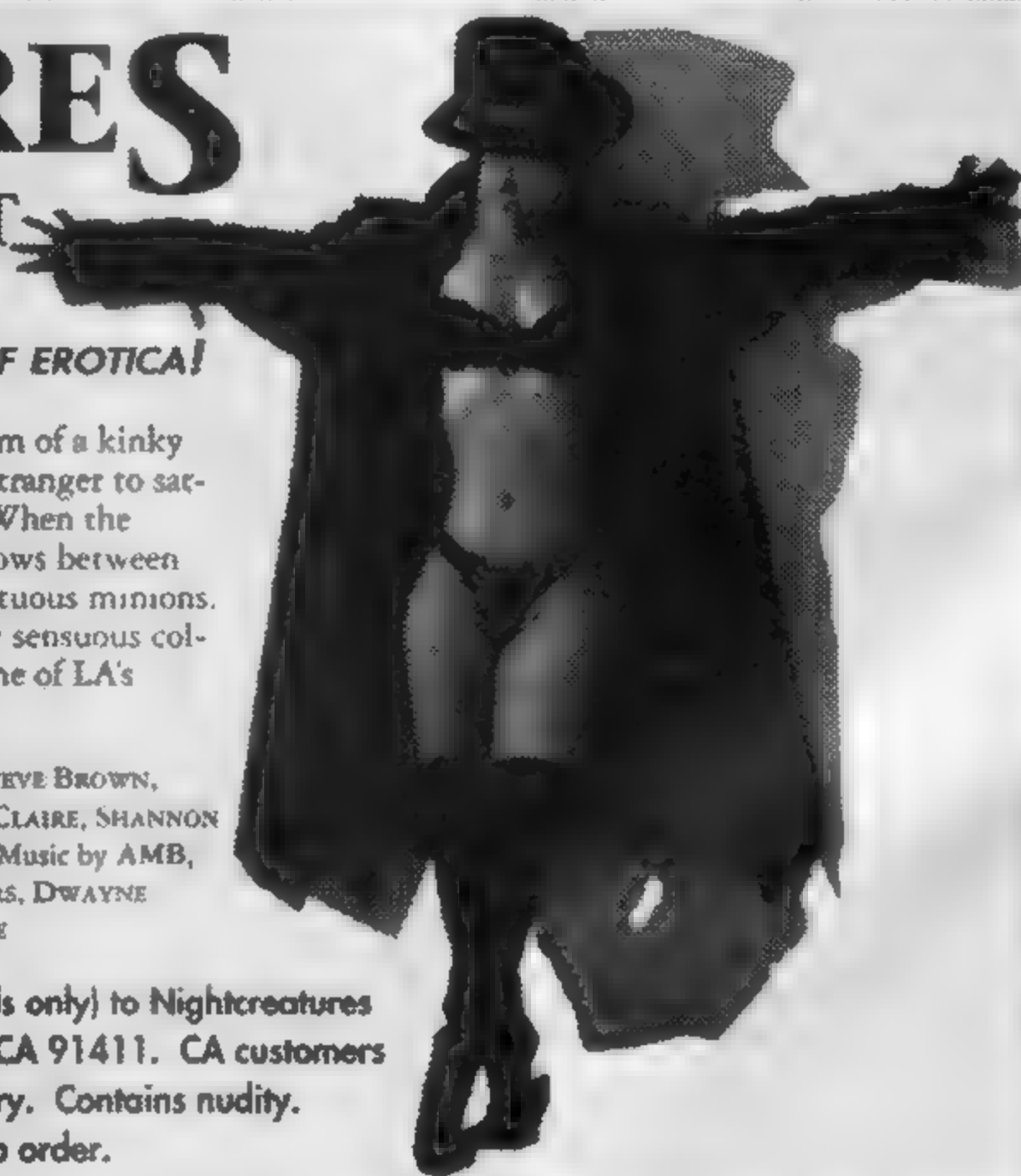
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If only Bill hadn't left ASBURY PARK.

Vinny, high-brow humor and talking head monologues.

—G.A.

## THE LOUNGE PEOPLE

97min/35mm

Frank Popper Productions, Inc.



The caliber of filmmaking technique in this feature is not something this publication usually receives for review. I mean, it looks good enough for the 3 a.m. slot on cable. The story of bored and sexually repressed aristocrats living on an island, *The Lounge People* lounges in its high-falutin' characters' excesses more than it skewers their criminally ludicrous behavior (which by all accounts seemed to be director Brad Saunders' original intent). The polished look (minus a few too many pointless long shots), snobbish dialog (which enforces the idea that most rich people are assholes—shit, no kidding!) and recognizable names (Buck Henry stars) only serve to remind the viewer that the plot, as well as the movie itself, seems to be ensconced in the arrogant stipulations of the

past decade. Ultimately, you'll wonder whether these affluent dicks are on this isle because they can afford it or because they are so goddamned lame nobody could stand living near them. Give me *Gilligan's Island's* Howells any day

—G.A.

## BILL OF ASBURY PARK

17min/Super 8 & Video

Love/Hate Productions



Ironically, the most entertaining moment in this pseudo-documentary about a group of smack-shooting, beer-swilling, on-the-road types has nothing to do with the video proper. Rather it is the opening "film" maker's apology detailing the incomplete nature of the piece. Difficulties surrounding Bill (of Asbury Park) himself plagued the video's completion. The director patiently explains that halfway through the production Bill lost interest and stopped talking to him altogether, but that he "had some ideas about it" and that he "hopes you like it". The real failure of *Bill* is not the disappearance of its title character, but that the director refuses to recognize interesting material when he sees it. Throughout the bulk of the video is an unbearable and incoherent narration that consistently steps on the original (and possibly interesting) audio. In one instance, the camera is trained on a manic depressive and his depressing girlfriend as they argue over the seemingly insignificant topic of either a slice of pizza or a pack of cigarettes. This looked to be an amusing and telling moment, but who the hell could hear over the droning monotone of pretentiously nonsensical narration. Who cares what the director's irrelevant musings



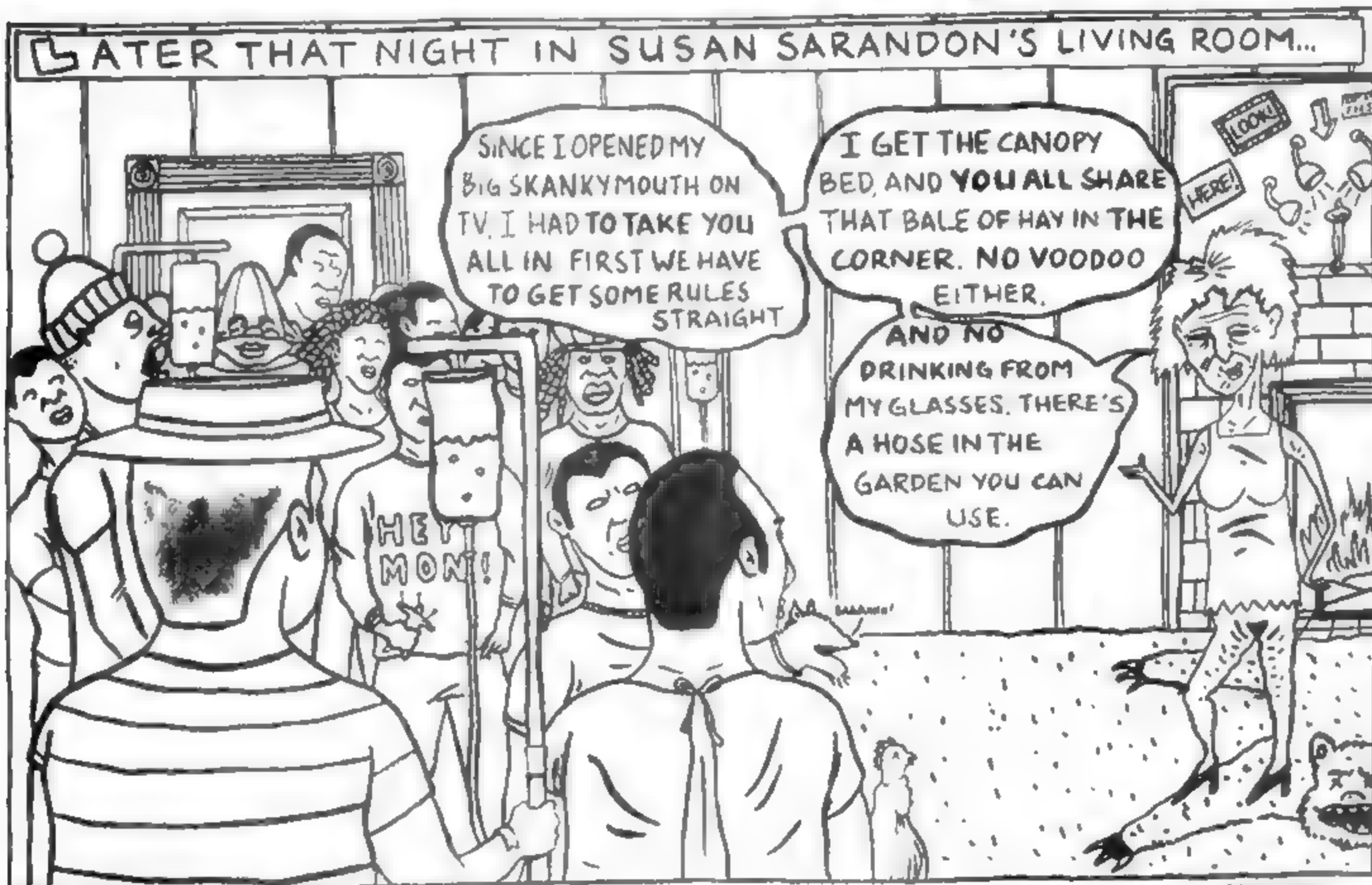
Gore aplenty in the surprisingly watchable HEARTSTOPPER.

Although vampires have become a tired parable in this plague-stricken world, John Russo's *Heartstopper* manages to rise above the level of trite so typical of this overwrought genre. This \$1,000,000 production stands apart and is far more enjoyable than the likes of that big mess called *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Writer/producer/director John Russo, one of George Romero's cohorts on *The Night of the Living Dead*, delivers a watchable fish-out-of-water suspense tale of an 18th-century bloodsucker who rises from the grave and stalks the dregs of 20th-century Pittsburgh. *Heartstopper* begins as Colonial-era doctor Benjamin Latham (Kevin Kindlin) is "misunderstood" for his unorthodox experiments and is hanged by the locals as a vampire. Over 200 years later, he returns, but his conscience only allows him to feed on the city's criminal element—as did Anne Parillaud in (that piece of crap) *Innocent Blood*. A disturbed descendant of Benjamin's, Matthew Latham (John Hall) helps thicken the plot, as does Benjamin's (somewhat perfunctory) romance with photojournalist Lenora Clayton (famous Zappa daughter, Moon). The panic that follows Benjamin's feeding frenzy is investigated by obsessive cop Ron Vargo (none other than make-up FX guru Tom Savini). *Heartstopper*, adapted from Russo's novel, *The Awakening*, boasts some deft direction and has the look of any Hollywood film. It's obvious that some time, effort and dollars went into the authentic feel, and for fans of the visceral, there's ample gore (by Savini), though never out of context. Out of all of the able performances, Savini's stands out. He emotes well and as the story progresses, we (somewhat painfully) learn that he's not over the accidental death of his young daughter. While superior to overblown industry offerings like *Candyman* and *Dr. Giggles* get exposure—a-plenty in googolplexes and video franchises nationwide, many horror fans and aspiring filmmakers miss out on quality independent fare like this. I am both—and also used to own a video store—and I would have stocked this title without reservation. If your local video store does not carry this, tell them they should, as it's worthy fare and is sure to have an audience.

—Spiney Norman







AAH, IF ONLY LIFE IMITATED ART!

- SCOTT RUSSO.



Gritty sensibilities overcome video voyeurism in **BRUTAL ARDOR**.

patriarchal domination, *Brutal Ardor* suffers from its own lack of illusion. The inherent sense of disturbing immediacy thrust upon the viewer through the medium of video is a barricade to the close-quartered scrutiny of

what should be voyeuristic peaks at highly secretive moments of emotional and physical violence. A running diary-like narration fills much of the soundtrack (and at the risk of offending the possibly Female author, Y

York) it seems thin and false—almost as if a man had written it. Hard lighting and a sparse storyline don't further *Brutal Ardor's* cause either and aside from a recurring well-shot montage of darkly lit rooms during the suggested

rape/beatings of the woman, the film falls on deaf ears, so to speak.

—K.B.

## INTERRUPTIONS

15min/Super 8

John Putsch/Michael Horvat Productions



Hey! If a viewer is left wanting more it's gotta be good. That's how I felt watching this far-too-short farce about TV commercials of the recent past. The plot, simply enough, concerns a sleepy-eyed man, waking up to a crummy breakfast while he grazes over the boob tube. First, a pseudo

*Today's Grandpa*, Howard Morton. He rings up an old friend and they laugh and reminisce about their schoolin' days in woodshop or chemistry, which left them both physically scarred. Co-directors Putsch (also seen on *Mad About You* and director of the hilarious short *The Walter Ego*) and Horvat have taken some creative material and executed it extremely well

—C.O.

## COPROPHILIA

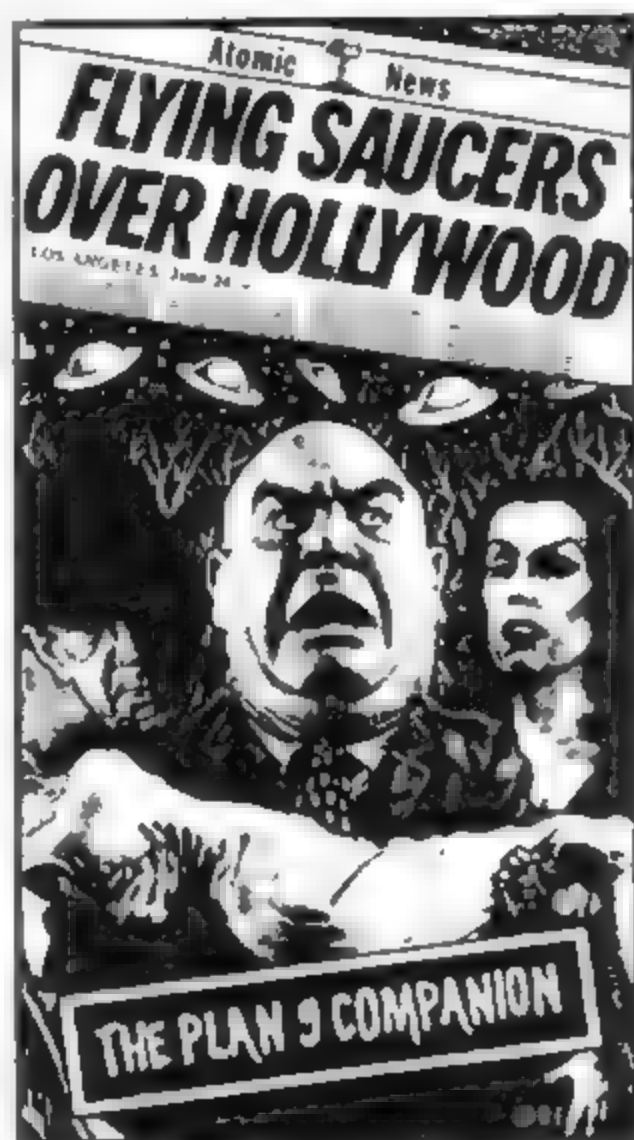
6min/16mm

Mys/Galanis Productions



Is it worth watching some guy get shit smeared on his face for a sick laugh? If you said "yes," then you'll release a hearty "ha" or two during this sophomoric yet worth-a-look effort by Dan Mys and Dean Galanis. Shot over a weekend for \$50, the story is simple enough: This really pissed-off guy sits around rambling about his crappy life ("The only things that bring me pleasure are eating and shitting," he whines). Meanwhile, his neighbor is always beating his roommate senseless—irritating our lead until he scoops a fresh dump from his toilet and visits the instigator, ready to put an end to the disturbance. Some amusing dialogue and a crunchy soundtrack brings this thing to life, but the payoff is a little less than expected. The sickeningly suggestive title is overbearing as far as amusing bowel movement action is concerned. Indeed, although the turd in the bowl looks authentic, the actual rub-all-over-my-mug stool looks fake (Hey, you see enough vile videos in your life and you become a stickler for details.) Real poop would have made this a solid "6."

—GA



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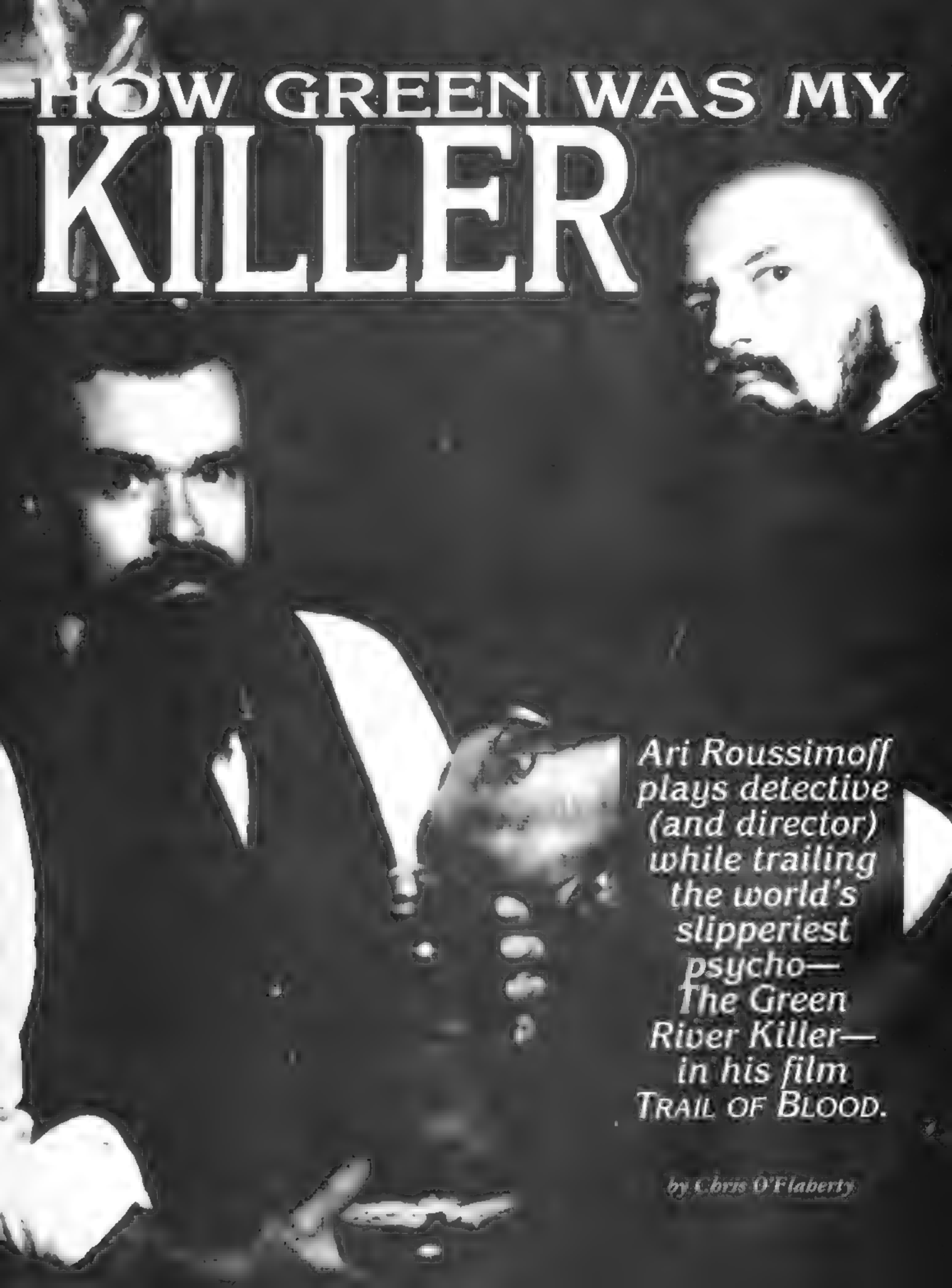
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# HOW GREEN WAS MY KILLER

Ari Roussimoff  
plays detective  
(and director)  
while trailing  
the world's  
slipperiest  
psycho—  
*The Green  
River Killer*—  
in his film  
*TRAIL OF BLOOD*.

*by Chris O'Flaherty*



**S**ERIAL KILLERS are still a hot cinematic topic—originally sparked by the critically acclaimed *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer* and fanned by last year's *The Silence of the Lambs* Oscar sweep. Add to this fire the John Wayne Gacy made-for-TV horrorshow *To Catch A Killer* and the in-post-production exploits of necrophile cannibal Jeffrey Dahmer. All examine the psychotic dementia behind these ritualistic misanthropes, but none appears more audacious, more intriguing, more utterly incomprehensible than Ari Roussimoff's destined-to-be controversial *Trail of Blood*.

Russian-born, New York-based filmmaker Roussimoff has literally spanned the continental US while filming *Trail of Blood*, pursuing the alleged footsteps of the brutal and evasive Green River Killer. Using what he cryptically calls "previously undisclosed" information, as well as private and official accounts, *Trail of Blood* delves into the mind of the heinous individual that has eluded national law enforcement since 1982. However, what makes this "creative" dramatization different from the standard psycho hunt flick is that the real-life killer has not yet been caught—and assumed to

evidence," he insists, "has disappeared conveniently." This curiosity has opened up several cans of worms, thus resulting in attempts to halt the film's production.

"We had gotten anonymous telephone calls telling us to quit, and I personally received a death threat," the celluloid Czar laments. The bald, bearded powerlifter doesn't seem like one to scare easily, but the death threat chilled him to the bone. Even so, Roussimoff continues filming, traveling as far as Amsterdam, Holland, where the killer may have struck.

*Trail of Blood* comprises 90% factual information, or so Roussimoff contends.

**"You never read about the mutilations—and there were mutilations in all cases."**

still be out hunting humans. But Roussimoff doesn't let this minor oversight hinder his tenacious vision.

"Much of what you read about the Green River Killer is quite incomplete," says Roussimoff, his suave Russian accent ringing true to his homeland. "There are many aspects of the case that have been hidden or concealed from the public. You never read about the mutilations—and there were mutilations in all cases. There's even fingerprints and teeth imprints. The film will cover it all."

For those serial killer illiterates out there, the Green River Killings began over a decade ago in Washington state. A total of 48 bodies, all female, were discovered on the banks of the Green River. Since then, similarly styled slayings have surfaced in Massachusetts, California, Canada and Mexico. Mutilations and drugs, according to Roussimoff, are just two of the many parallels that connect each case. If his theory is correct, the total tally may include over 100 victims of one madman. Incredibly, Roussimoff is making some shocking allegations involving an investigative cover-up, maybe even a conspiracy, to keep the killer's identity a secret. "Much of the vital

The rest combines a tinge of hypothetical assumption sprinkled with cinematic creativity. Roussimoff adds, "The film has certain documentary style elements, although it is not a documentary. It is a dramatization."

With *Blood* nearly two-thirds complete, Roussimoff is presently searching for a U.S. distributor. Upon completion, Roussimoff, and his writing-acting-investigating crew, will undoubtedly be ready for the talk show circuit, possibly shedding new light on this unsolved case. Logic says that this many murders over this lengthy time period should have apprehended a suspect by now. What secrets are being concealed, and why? *Blood*, Roussimoff assures, will deal with all of this and much more.

"Yes, there is an individual who we do believe is the Green River Killer," the director-detective proudly admits. "But the man who did these crimes will never be officially caught!"

Will *Trail of Blood* unlock the mysteries behind the Green River Killings, or is Roussimoff just yanking our collective chains? Who knows? The truth may emerge in the final cut and I, for one, anxiously await the premier. **(FNG)**

**Left:** Artist, serial killer devotee and *Trail* costar Joe Coleman confers with director Roussimoff—and shows off his pickled fetus collection.

# DEATHTRIP



"Kern seemingly aspires to be the downtown David Cronenberg."

—J. HOBERMAN, *THE VILLAGE VOICE*

"Kern gets some of the most horrific images since David Lynch's *Eraserhead*."

—*THE LOS ANGELES TIMES*

## VOLUME **ONE**

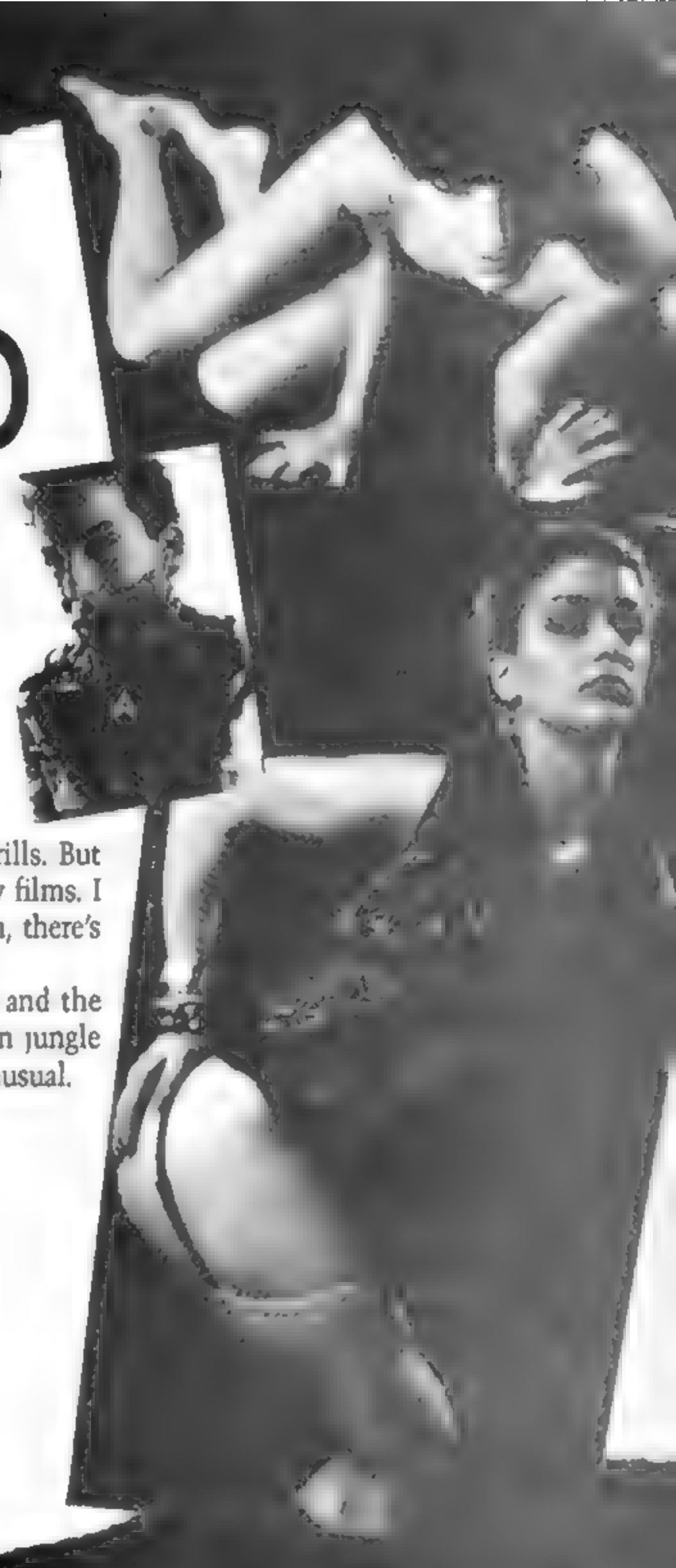
The Manhattan  
Love Suicides (1985)  
The Right Side  
of My Brain (1984)  
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## MEAT & MOVIES

*Filmmaker Jonathan Reiss forges ahead in his celluloid investigations of twisted metal, fragile flesh and plenty of well-placed subversion.*

*By David E. Williams*

**T**HROUGH Vaughn I discovered the true significance of the automobile crash, the meaning of whiplash injuries and roll-over, the ecstasies of head-on collisions. Together we visited the Road Research Laboratory twenty miles to the west of London, and watched the calibrated vehicles crashing into concrete target blocks. Later, in his apartment, Vaughn screened slow-motion films of test calibrations that he had photographed with his cine-camera —from *Crash*, by J.G. Ballard



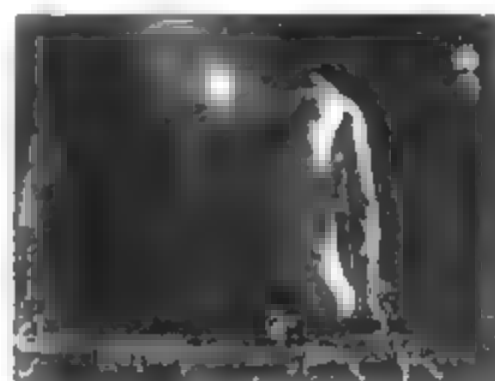
Sherree Rose

Despite whatever public perception has evolved around Jonathan Reiss' video and film work, he's a pretty normal guy. Sure, his office is decorated with blessed Tibetan skulls, glass cases filled with hideous insects and shelves laden with serial killer documentation

(plus a nearly complete collection of Ballard first editions)—but whose isn't these days?

So how does such a seemingly average Jon, the product of a middle class upbringing and a UCLA education, devise a machines-only world in which steel-framed and bone-encrusted inhabitants cavort amidst tar-seeping

walls? A viciously automated torture chair bent on literally devouring its occupants? A fetish dungeon populated by leather-clad vixens wielding cat 'o nine tails against bare male flesh and piercing erect nipples with hypodermic needles?



He stares into a mirror. He climbs into The Chair. The mechanism activates. Rising, it locks into place.



Cinematographer Leonard Levy (behind camera), Jonathan Reiss and Mark Pauline on the set of *BITTER MESSAGE OF HOPELESS GRIEF*.

### THE DECENT INTO HELL

"I tried to get ahold of him for months!" exclaimed Reiss one afternoon, tooling his fashionably battered Dodge Dart through mid-day Los Angeles traffic. "Richard Kern was one person who knew how to self-distribute his films to a specific audience and I knew that same audience would be interested in the work I was doing with SRL, especially *Bitter Message*—but I never got the information out of him." Pulling into a restaurant parking lot, Reiss added, "But that was years ago. We did it without him."

And from the following conversation, it became obvious that the fiercely independent attitude that drove Reiss over the last ten years had not diminished—but intensified.

By 1981 Reiss had already cut his teeth producing, shooting and editing dozens of live concert videos as a part of Joe Rees' infamous Target Video organization [see story p. 67]. A sort of punk media collective, the grass-roots San Francisco group documented liter-

**They work as a horror film might, in that you get the experience of terror without the physical danger."**

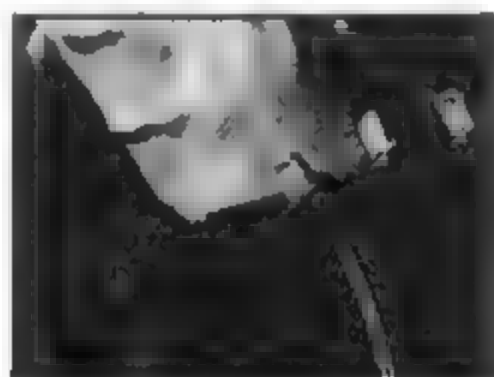
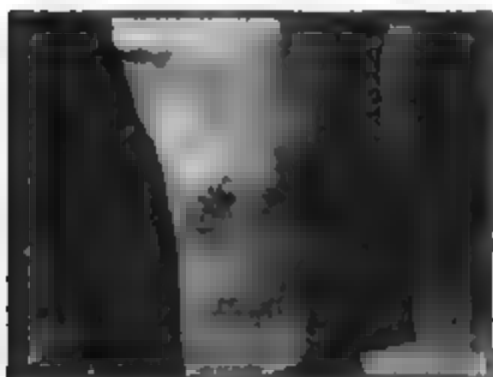
**—Reiss on the SRL performance tapes**

ally hundreds of bands and artists. Included were The Dead Kennedys, Lydia Lunch with Teen-Age Jesus and the Jerks and early SRL performances featuring a bespectacled Mark Pauline toying with his then-crude mechanical creations—which Reiss, Rees and Pauline edited into *Seven Machine Performances* (1982), the first SRL video release through Target.

"So I became more involved with Joe on the next videos [*A Scenic Harvest From The Kingdom of Pain* (1984) and *The Virtues of Negative Fascination* (1986)]," Reiss says. "I already had interest in the kinds of things Mark was exploring in his first shows—the effects of technology on society and power relationships—but the prospect of taking elements from them and recombining them with video was something else. We could redefine the events and emphasize specifics by removing extraneous material. That was a big part of what we were doing at Target anyways, but with music. Also, the SRL performances were very political without relying on words or lyrics—much more visual, so I felt there was a lot to work with and a lot of different aspects to the machines, other than just documenting the shows, that could be further explored. Using them in my film *Baited Trap* [in 1986] as these nightmarish dream figures was part of that idea.

"Of course none of the SRL performance tapes are documentaries—even the first [*Seven Machine Performances*], which is relatively simplistic—but they present an experience that it was like to be there. They work as a horror film might, in that you get the experience of terror without the physical danger."

At least for the audience at home



His hands relax.

Steel restraints lock them in.

He watches with anticipation.

Needles pierce his wrists.





(FROM LEFT) DP Gary Tieshe shoots Flannigan with his wind-up; a reluctant Reznor is caged in the video opener; Reiss is put in *The Chair* by clowning MBP FX guys Luke Khanlian and Dave Doups; Flannigan is relatively unscarred.

Leaving Target, Reiss focused on the development of an autonomous video division of SRL, attempting to redefine each successive video by successfully producing broadcast quality programming (*The Will to Provoke* in 1988) and, ultimately, a machine "purist" scenario devoid of human presence or meaning—resulting in the machines-only short *A Bitter Message of Hopeless Grief* (1988).

That decade of subsisting on his wits and personal deficit spending turned this self-described "white boy from the suburbs born with every advantage" into someone aware of the importance of filmmaking's dark side—*bustle*.

During the production of the triptych video document *The Pleasures of Uninhibited Excess* (1990), Reiss realized his direct association with SRL was coming to a close—with creative differences with Pauline and Reiss' growing interest in doing feature film work hastening the split.

"I'd done most everything I wanted to with SRL, and while I'd certainly consider future projects with Mark, it was time to do something else," the filmmaker explains diplomatically.

I first met Reiss while trying to secure video distribution rights to *Bitter Message*—and his other SRL-related titles—which had never really been released in any organized manner outside of mail-order through SRL. To my dismay, Rick Rubin's iconoclastic Def American record label had decided to dabble in video and tied up the entire SRL catalog. At the time, Reiss himself was tied up with problems regarding the fate of his first feature, *Love Is Like That*. Directed by his wife, Jill Goldman, the entertainingly bizarre romantic comedy (starring Tom Sizemore and Pamela Gidley) had fallen into a distribution hell it has yet to escape.

I was contacted some months later by a record company PR rep, who was seeking a director for an industrial-

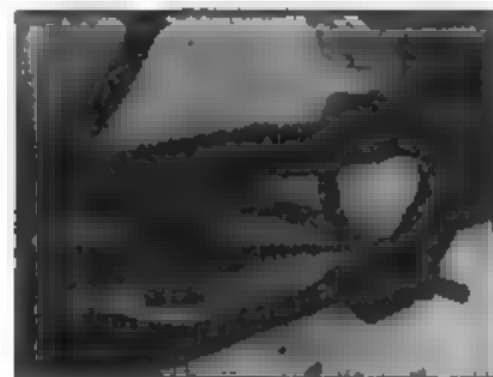
strength, Nine Inch Nails music video. She explained that metals-specialist Shinya Tsukamoto (*Tetsuo: The Iron Man*) had been the first choice, but was unavailable—then off helming *Tetsuo II: The Body Hammer*—and wondered if I knew anyone of similar interests.

I quickly found pimping to be a natural talent—though I didn't tell Reiss he was a *second* choice.

### A TASTE FOR PAIN

The resulting video, for the tune "Happiness In Slavery" from NIN's it-took-fucking-forever-and-only-has-six-songs EP *Broken*, took shape in a warehouse near beautiful downtown Burbank over a perilously hot three days. But for some, the dry heat was only a secondary discomfort.

A masochist's ultimate fantasy, Reiss' *Slavery* premise offers a man consumed by ritualistic self-abuse—obsessed with the prospect of having a tormentor who will not listen to his



He reacts with a sick grin.

A steel pincher moves in.

It selects a target.

The sharp claw digs in.



Reiss lines up the next shot as Flannigan relaxes—as much as possible.

shrieks of pain or cries for pity. The result was "The Chair," *Slavery's* brutally automated antagonist. Though it appears to be the manifestation of a Nazi dentist's wet dream, it's actually the product of Michael Burnett Productions, a local effects company responsible for the latex-built carnage in such Hollywood tripe as *Universal Soldier*. Powered by high pressure air lines, the contraption boasts multiple spiderlike arms wielding spinning blades, three-pronged pincers and gouging drills. The Chair is a torture device completely in tune for the 90s: High-tech yet malignantly Medieval. Like some La-Z-Boy Terminator, it will not stop until it completes its task—one that Reiss' storyboards have outlined in graphic, black-and-white detail. Let's just say that this clash of flesh and steel has the expected outcome—times ten—as servomotors beat out muscle and bone again.

**"I think I scared  
some people on  
the set because  
I could imagine  
what it would  
be like to have  
metal claws tear-  
ing at my flesh."**

—Bob Flannigan

Performance artist/actor Bob Flannigan, who lay strapped within the steel and leather confines of The Chair, is nude—save for some smears and chunks of special makeup posing as bloody bits of skin and flesh. Flannigan is one of the few people on set who isn't sticky with sweat—just crimson-stained Karo syrup.

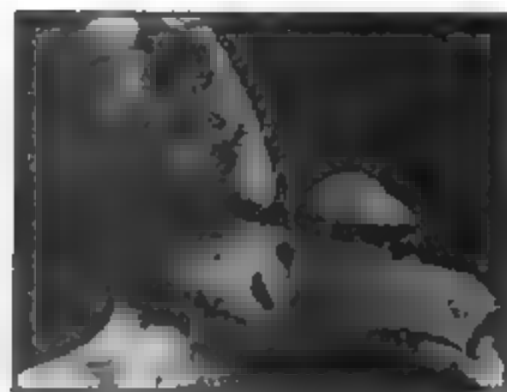
"The penis should be pointed down," Reiss explains clinically, circling The Chair and the MBP makeup artists working on Flannigan. "Otherwise it would appear that he was erect, and that wouldn't be correct for this shot."

Yeah, as if a horrifically tortured man smeared with gore should have an erection in *any* shot.

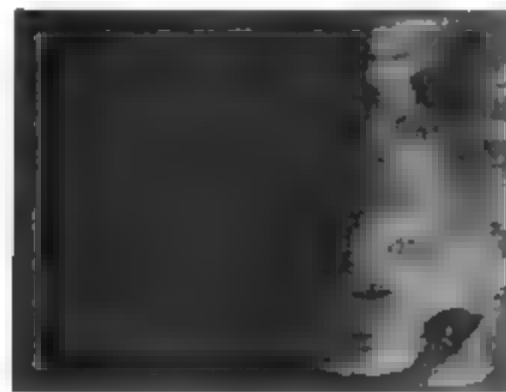
Eyes searching for a pair of already "blood"-stained hands to perform his obvious bidding, it's soon apparent to Reiss that the supposedly unshakable gore gurus aren't up to the task of repositioning the nonthreatening extremity. Out of the shadows appears Flannigan's girlfriend, Sheree Rose, to perform the dirty deed—much to the relief of the squeamish crew.

#### FLOWERS, ASSHOLES & WORMS

Directly inspired by Octave Mirbeau's 1899-penned, long-banned erotic novel *The Torture Garden*—in which various desires play out against the backdrop of a Chinese garden where torture is practiced as an art-form—the *Slavery* set features a small plot of tangled greenery surrounding The Chair. Two PAs will spend the following 48 hours trying to keep the array of vegetation alive, but it'll be worth it if only for the sake of the inherently sick joke attached. You see, within the context of the film, the plants feed on the blood and greasy spoils of processed Chair inhabitants—



He reaches him self for pain.



He screams as it strikes.



The pincher tears at his flesh.



It pulls out a bloody hunk.



Reiss shoots the bone and steel details of the torture room.

which are delivered via a metallic "ass-hole" installed behind the machine's pedestal.

Like some annex to the *Bitter Message* machine world, the set similarly boasts a dirt floor, canvas coated surfaces and meter-long seeps of tar emanating from the walls. As designed by Liz Young, who not-coincidentally art directed *Message*, the place seems like a natural habitat to Reiss, who jokes with the crew adjusting The Chair's power-recliner mechanism. Meanwhile NIN's Trent Reznor wanders about, videotaping the day's gruesome events.

"I'd just suggest that we see some more meaty chunks come out, like more of a stream," Reznor comments after watching the MBP team force-feed a choice mix of cow brains, foam latex and assorted gore through the sphincter-like orifice, eliciting nervously ghoulish laughs from the crew and retching sounds from several vegetarian-looking PAs. Pausing to watch another take on a video monitor, he

confesses, "This is really amazing, I mean, the only other videos we've done have been these little Super 8 jobs. But this—this is really *happening*."

From the person who transformed a notorious living room in a certain house on Cielo Drive in the Hollywood hills into his recording studio—complete with a decorative American flag—Reznor's thrill over the afternoon's events bordered on irony.

The guts are run through the sphincter again and, much to everyone's disgust, they have reached that magically realistic consistency; oozing out with a seriously gross *splat*. Satisfied, Reiss and others begin dressing the set with massive night-crawlers—huge, slimy ones that immediately begin burrowing into the garden's soft brown soil and the even softer pile of glistening offal.

"Pretty glamorous, huh?" says Reiss jovially with worm in hand as director of photography Gary Tieche captures the annelids on film with his wind-up

Sheree Rose



Reiss helps pile on the blood and guts for the goriffic finale.



Flannigan watches the pincher with some degree of interest.

Bell & Howell camera. Tieche is a guy of Clint Eastwood-like stature and vocalness who obviously prefers to communicate with his camera. He just smiles, peering into his eyepiece to see the magnified bait-worms twist amidst the blood, brains and blossoms.

## PIGS TO THE SLAUGHTER

Flannigan's chest heaves spasmodically as he battles a coughing fit brought on by his cystic fibrosis. Fortunately, the actor's real-life obsession with confinement as sexual gratification uniquely qualifies him for the role—making the situation less a torture than a personal challenge. He relates the experience to an old cartoon he had seen as a child. Entitled *Pigs Is Pigs* (Warner Bros., 1938), the toon featured an automated chair that forced its subject—an image that stayed with Flannigan, brewing seductively in the back of his mind as an early influence on his S&M lifestyle.

"I've always had this erotic thing about force-feeding and being strapped



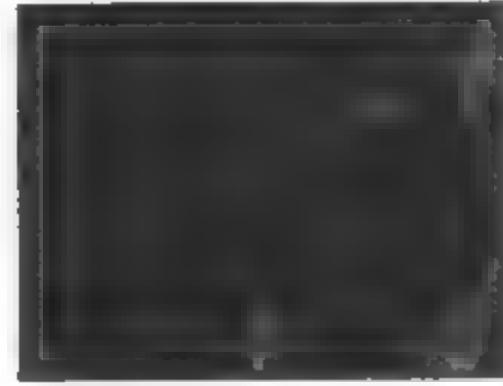
He screams with pain.



The drill comes into play.



It sinks in below the knee.



He twists in agony.





Debbie Pappler, John Moser and Reiss on the Danzig video set.

Mark Weinkle submits to Jill Goldman.

to chairs, so this cartoon was always major for me," Flannigan later explained. "Years later, I acquired a copy and it was all there, just like I'd remembered it. So here I was, living out my fantasy.

"I don't know that Jon [Reiss] had ever seen the cartoon, I hadn't even told him about it until after I read the script, but he had seen a show I'd done a few years ago at a publication party for the Re/Search book *Modern Primitives*. In it, I was strapped to a chair and had all these clothes pins attached to my body. They were attached by wires to a system of weights that would pull them off in order over time. Through osmosis, I think Jon picked up some elements of that, but it's really amazing how it would all come together in the video.

"I've always liked the idea of machines doing something to me—submitting to your fate. I've also

always been interested in time-based autoerotic sadomasochistic events for pleasure. Whether it be clothespins attached to me with dripping water filling a container, building up enough weight to pull it off, or locking myself up in handcuffs and waiting for a block of ice with the key inside to melt so I can get out—they're all mechanical things I have no control over. The Chair is exactly like that, but it's the ultimate. It's a suicidal final act. It's programmed to do certain things without even a person there to appeal to—you've made the decision to be there."

Of course one fundamental difference between the activities depicted in the *Slavery* video and Flannigan's S&M expertise is that the experience is inherently false, without real danger or pain.

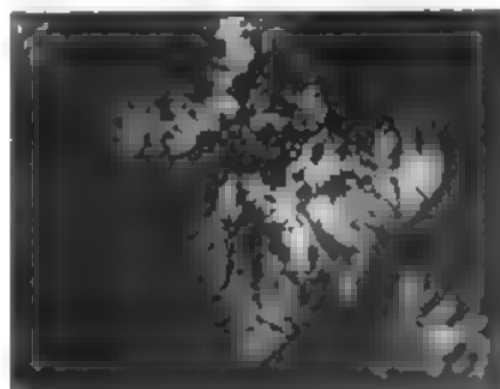
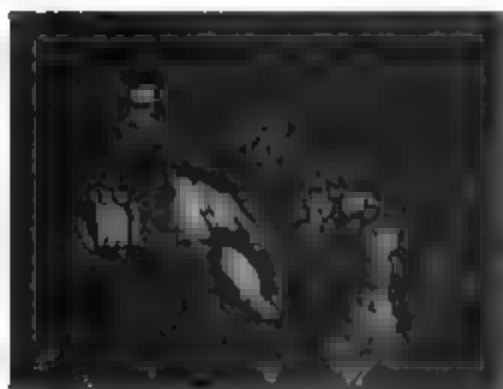
"It wasn't a turn on," Flannigan admits. "With the crew, the fact that

filmmaking demands you to break events into tiny segments—but it was an act that mirrored some real feelings and experiences. I think I scared some people on the set because I could imagine what it would be like to have metal claws tearing at my flesh—I could imagine that pain and and perform appropriately. It was fun to see their reactions—that was real."

Now completing *Slavery*, Flannigan (also the subject of an upcoming Re/Search profile) has put this act to work by acting in director Michael Tolkin's feature, *New Age*. In it, Flannigan graphically demonstrates his affinity for pain with a bed of nails.

## SNUFF FILM JITTERS

The MBP team of Luke Khanlian and Dave Doupis are still dabbing Flannigan with faux gore of gelatin, mashed bananas and food coloring—



The Chair runs amok. The pain is unbearable. He dies and is processed. Out through the sphincter.

promising Reiss that ten more minutes would ensure their work's authenticity. The director relents. After years of documenting live SRL shows with combat photography techniques that often put his crew and collaborators in the midst of barely controllable, flame-belching, metal behemoths bent on destroying one another, Reiss appreciates the relative safety of "makeup effects" as opposed to bodily harm.

A crewperson mutters that they feel as if they are working on a snuff film. In an abstract sense, they are—making Reiss' calm professionalism and smiles seem even more curious. But the feeling prompts others to take drastic measures.

One hulking production member confronts me in the bathroom, demanding that I give him the film in my camera. He claims that he'd been caught in several of the shots I'd taken of the set and that he couldn't allow people to know that he had been associated with such a heinous project. Fortunately, he wasn't a complete idiot and relented to my careful rebuttal—asking only that I send the negatives and any prints including his ugly mug to a certain Van Nuys address, presumably for a hasty destruction. No problem, I lied, realizing it was time to leave.

#### AFTERMATH

As finished, *Happiness In Slavery* is at best reprehensible and repellent, garnering strong reaction from all who see it. Entertainment trade papers ran reports about it being a hit among record execs and those few civilians lucky enough not to rely solely on the panty-waists at MTV for access to new music—as the FCC regulations-less cable channel is apparently too preoccupied with the oh-so-alternative likes

of Aerosmith to make room for the clip. Most entertainingly, a friend tormented director Oliver Stone with a copy—prompting him to run about the office clutching his genitals while demanding that it be turned off.

Keeping in contact with Reiss in connection to this story, I last saw him peering into a video monitor while working on a video for the Gothic-metal group Danzig—which followed clips for the groups Mindbomb and Proper Grounds. In one scene, a woman encased in a patent leather corset tortures a cadre of men with a whip, her stiletto heels and plenty of harsh looks. She appears to have the sadistic gusto of a professional.

Turning to me, Reiss pointed at the dominatrix and said, "That's my wife, Jill. Did you recognize her?"

Somewhat shocked, I admitted I hadn't.

"She really got into the role, but now everybody probably thinks we're into that stuff—like we have this complete subterranean room at home full of bondage gear."

Yeah, right next to the blessed Tibetan skull collection. **[JYG]**



Reznor enters.

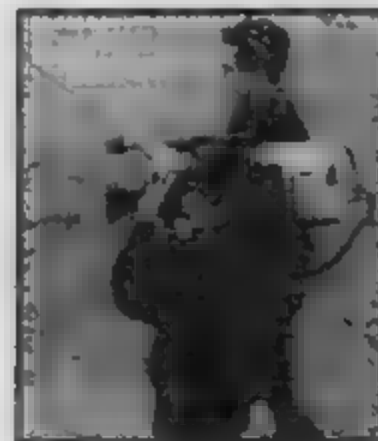


It begins again.

## REISS/SRL FILMOGRAPHY

### SEVEN MACHINE PERFORMANCES

(Target Video/SRL)  
Editing—Joe Rees, Jon Reiss & Mark Pauline  
(53 min./Video 1979-82)



Reiss and Gladsjo

### A SCENIC HARVEST FROM THE KINGDOM OF PAIN

(Target Video/SRL)  
Producer/Director/Editor—J. Reiss  
Machines—M. Pauline, Matt Heckert, Eric Werner & SRL  
(53 min./Video 1984)

### BAITED TRAP (Reiss/SRL)

Writer/Producer/  
Director/Editor—J. Reiss  
Cinematography—  
Leonard Levy  
Art Direction—Liz Young  
Machines—M. Pauline,  
M. Heckert & SRL  
(12 min./16mm/B&W 1986)



Linda Levinson

BAITED TRAP

### THE VIRTUES OF NEGATIVE FASCINATION (Target Video/SRL)

Producer/Director/Editor—J. Reiss  
Machines—M. Pauline, M. Heckert & SRL  
(70 min./Video 1986)

### THE WILL TO PROVOKE (SRL/Reiss/Gladsjo)

Producer/Director—J. Reiss  
Editor—Leslie Asako Gladsjo  
Machines—M. Pauline, M. Heckert & SRL  
(48 min./Video 1988)

### A BITTER MESSAGE OF HOPELESS GRIEF (SRL/Reiss)

Producer/Director/Editor—J. Reiss  
Machines and Fictional World—  
M. Pauline, M. Heckert & SRL  
Cinematography—L. Levy  
Art Direction—L. Young  
(13 min./16mm 1988)



6th St Studio

BITTER MESSAGE

### THE PLEASURES OF UNINHIBITED EXCESS (SRL/Reiss/Gladsjo)

Producer—J. Reiss  
Directors—J. Reiss, L. A. Gladsjo  
Editor—L. A. Gladsjo  
Machines—M. Pauline & SRL (44 min./Video 1990)

The Will to Provoke was released by Def American Visuals and can be easily had. For others, contact SRL at 1438 San Bruno Ave, Bldg C, San Francisco, CA 94110

*Mark Patrone*

# THE IRON

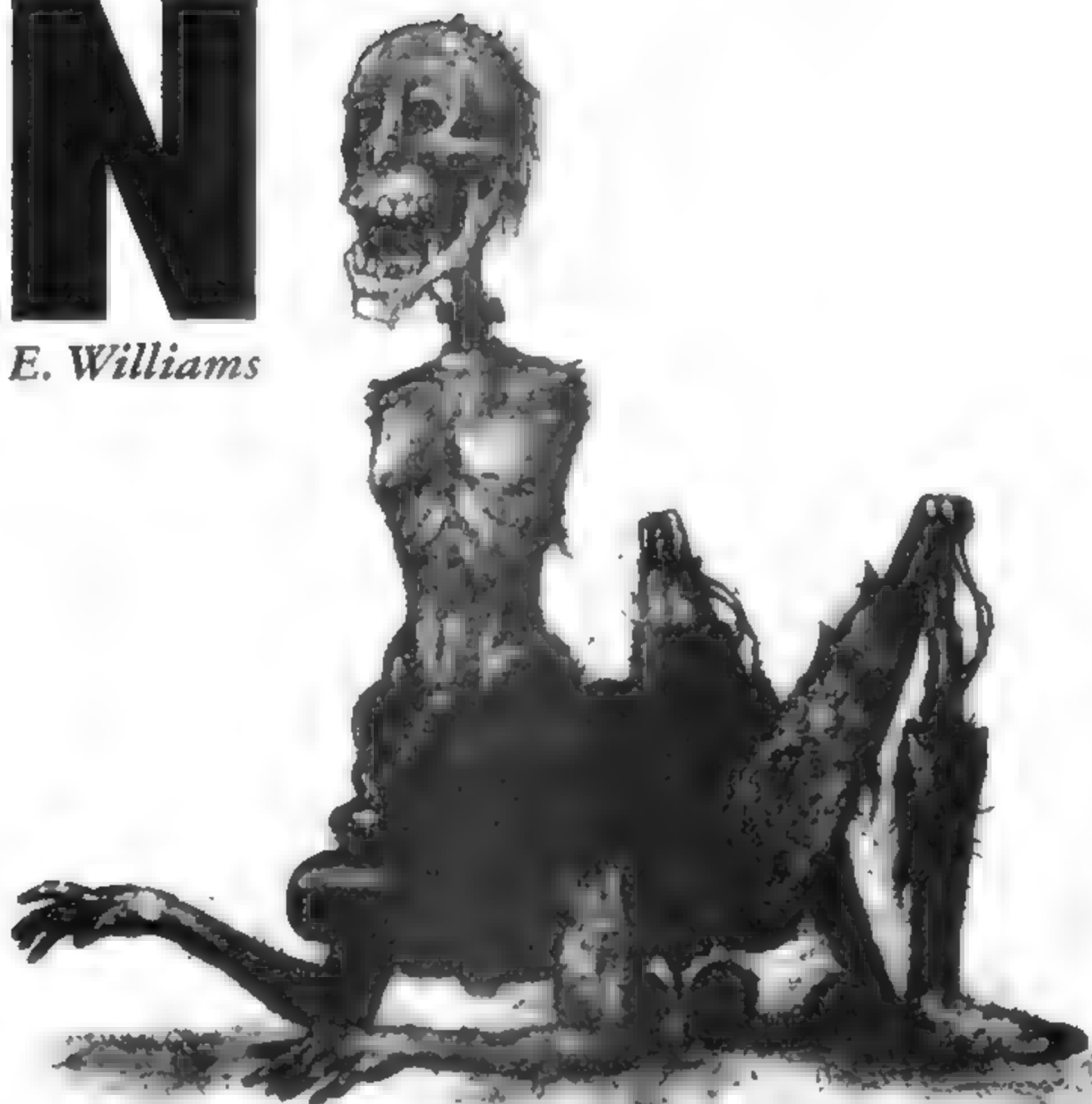
THE BRAINCHILD  
AND INSTRUMENT OF  
A FORMER JUVENILE  
DELINQUENT,  
SURVIVAL RESEARCH  
LABORATORIES HAS  
PROVIDED ITS  
FOUNDER WITH THE  
WORLD'S BEST  
EXCUSE FOR  
EXERCISING HIS  
DESTRUCTIVE  
TENDENCIES—ART.

*Illustration by Dan Smith*



# MAN

*Interview by David E. Williams*



**A**FTER GETTING LOST IN A MAZE-LIKE SAN Francisco industrial zone, my copilot and I got final directions to the SRL compound—which concluded with the phrase “Turn right at the shipping containers.” Pulling up to a squat warehouse-like structure emblazoned with the organization’s initials in foot-tall red letters, we were greeted by a sign warning, “These premises are under constant TV surveillance.” It seemed like a joke, judging from the decidedly low-tech structure, but upon approaching the gaping main door a shrill alarm announced our presence. With that, Mark Pauline appears, grease and grime-stained (I assumed) from a long day of machine wrangling.

As a confrontationalist, Mark Pauline literally leads with his right—faintly smiling as he cordially extends his reconstructed right hand for a customary flesh pressing. Shattered by an accidental rocket fuel explosion in 1982, Pauline’s scarred extremity, featuring several grafted toes standing in for fingers and an oval patch of smooth skin where his thumb should be, is an apt symbol for SRL—one of revamped mechanics recombined for alternate uses. Mine is hardly an original metaphor—given the ten years since Pauline’s brush with mortality and the press’ affinity for

would-be deep meanings—but his constant barrage of right-handed ear scratching, chin rubbing and nose picking that punctuated our meeting left a lasting impression. It’s an endurance test during which you try not to linger on his injury, but (consciously or not) he won’t let you forget it.

Regardless of his international stature as an “artist,” Pauline bares more than a passing resemblance to my neighborhood mechanic—not physically, but in casual stance and attitude. He looks like a guy who could charge you \$55 an hour and not rush the job for a single second. Even those who respect SRL tend to interpret this aloofness as smug arrogance, but few enjoy the same degree of focus Pauline brings to his work.

We engage in the aforementioned introductory handshake, with me quickly dropping my well-intentioned (and anticipated) outstretched left as he brought up his medically altered right. He has a firm, no bullshit grip.

Pauline leads us into the warehouse, which is actually a sprawling machine shop filled with lathes, drill presses and other, less recognizable tools—not to mention an abundance of *obtanium*, the “aggressively scavenged” parts from which the SRL creations are wrought. Proudly displayed in one

**The Running Machine and the V-1 assault audiences with a combination of brutish speed, heat and brain-boiling vibrations. The V-1 can be heard for 10 miles.**

corner was the booty of a previous night's raid: four specially-designed railroad car wheels complete with individual disc-brake systems—definitely a very special order from Midnight Auto Supply.

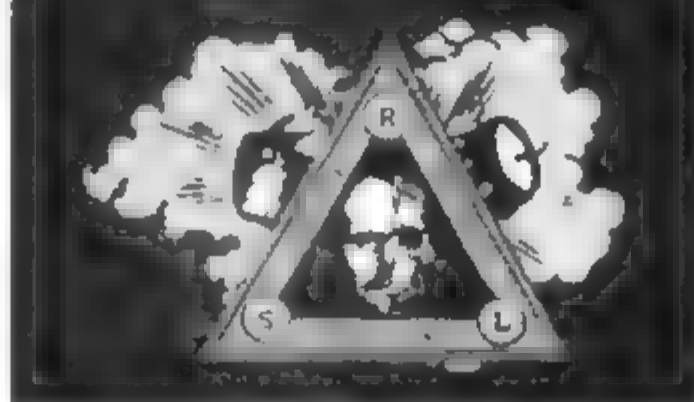
He gives us the grand tour. Hanging from the rafters and stored in every available area are the metallic SRL Players: The One-Ton Walking Machine, The Screw Machine, The Running Machine, The Big Arm and many others, some dating back to 1978 when Pauline founded the organization with the idea of creating a new form of performance without direct human participants—but with machines that could adopt specific traits and become characters in their own right within controlled circumstance. Few boast human form though some sprout hydraulic cable dreadlocks and others boast chain-driven limbs that crudely mimic human movement—but all wield skull-crushing power of some variety.

Pointing to one boxy creation, featuring a massive two-prong, forked arm, Pauline quickly explains that it consists mostly of a massive military power supply that was built for field testing lasers—but has since been adapted for blowing 4-inch wide holes in sheet steel and spraying sparks across wide swaths of performance area. Something about the way he emphasizes the word *military* hints at an inner lust for Pentagon-grade hardware, the kind of *obtanium* that is nonexistent outside a Lockheed development lab.

My suspicions intensify as he demonstrates a large-bore, remote controlled air cannon that hurls one pound, beer can-sized projectiles over 100 yards. Coupled to a computerized camera system, the gun can be aimed with a special headset—targeting anything the operator looks at with deadly precision. Amused by our shock, Pauline attests that the law does not cover air-driven devices such as this—though it would clearly be illegal if it were chemically or explosively powered. Similar loopholes have allowed him to operate an ear-



**"SO FAR AS DOING SOMETHING WITH A HUMAN CORPSE IS CONCERNED, THE ONLY PROBLEM WOULD BE OBTAINING ONE"**



splitting replica of a WWII era V-1 Buzzbomb rocket engine and fire a molten metal-spewing electromagnetic rail gun—a device once considered an integral component of the space-based, "Star Wars"/SDI global missile shield

Self-immolated Branch Davidian cult leader David Koresh could have avoided a lot of legal hassles and packed a lot more firepower if he'd had Pauline on his side

Excusing himself and offering us the run of the place, Pauline disappears. After scrounging around, we find the master welder (whose last day job was installing

high-pressure ballast tanks in a Navy guided missile frigate) crouched in front of a broken clothes dryer, affixing a clear plastic door to its face as a semi-circle of SRL coconspirators surround him. Discussing the possibility of mounting a major performance in New York, Pauline effectively ends their conversation by saying "There aren't any wiring plans or instructions to follow for this stuff, so the real problem is time. I've got to have time to get it together

Presumably, "getting it together" has as much to do with preparing the machines as it does devising a suitably inspirational theme for the performance. The last SRL show scheduled for New York was preempted by public protests after Pauline included a massive bible burning in the show. One machine was to be covered with donated bibles much like the heat resistant tiles on the Space Shuttle—and then assaulted by others armed with diesel-fed flamethrowers. Curiously, the sponsors, a seemingly open-minded arts organization, felt this First Amendment exercise was in poor taste and deliberately designed to provoke outrage. As if this wasn't expected from an organization like SRL, they were not amused, pulled their financial support and killed the event

Fortunately, Pauline was willing to take time out for this interview, but not before concocting a strong smelling pot of coffee and retiring to the shop's supergrunge lounge.

*Wasn't SRL approached by someone to reanimate a human corpse?*

That was a while ago, but yeah. This guy had somehow obtained a mummified human torso—including the shoulders and head—and he offered it to us. I didn't have any problem with taking it off his hands, but he had certain ideas for it and they didn't appeal to us. He wanted it for more like a puppet show—but he wanted us to do the work. [See full story p. 60] So far as doing something with a human corpse is concerned, the only problem would be obtaining one—but we've never allowed any of the machines to be used for other people's purposes. We've turned down a lot of offers and a lot of money from people who've wanted to use them in commercials and rock videos, but that's not what we built them for—and it wouldn't be fair to the people who worked on them for profit to be made that way. SRL is a volunteer organization, so unless people are getting what they're worth, nobody gets paid.

*Even the very early SRL performances are on video, so there's this whole chronology in which you can see progressions between the shows. Is there any one of the tapes that you think shows a real marked difference?*

Well, I think each of the tapes mark off a different period in the organization. The first set of machine performances shot back in 1979—that was pretty much the stuff I was doing on my own with a few people helping me out. Then Eric Werner started working with me in '82, then me and Matt Heckert and Eric were working together, then it was more me and Matt doing stuff together. Then we started trying to get more science, computers and high-energy physics stuff into the shows. Part of the whole struggle with a thing like SRL is to keep something different and fresh and new all the time, but it takes a lot of effort to do that, especially if you've been doing it this many years. But there are ways—it's possible.

Part of what I'd like to think we can do at SRL is to prove that you can be working in an area for like 20, 30 or even 50 years and still be doing original work all the time. A few people have done that and although it's not recognized by most people, I personally consider it to be the highest level of human achievement. I think that's reflected in the videos and you can see SRL change pretty radically from tape to tape.

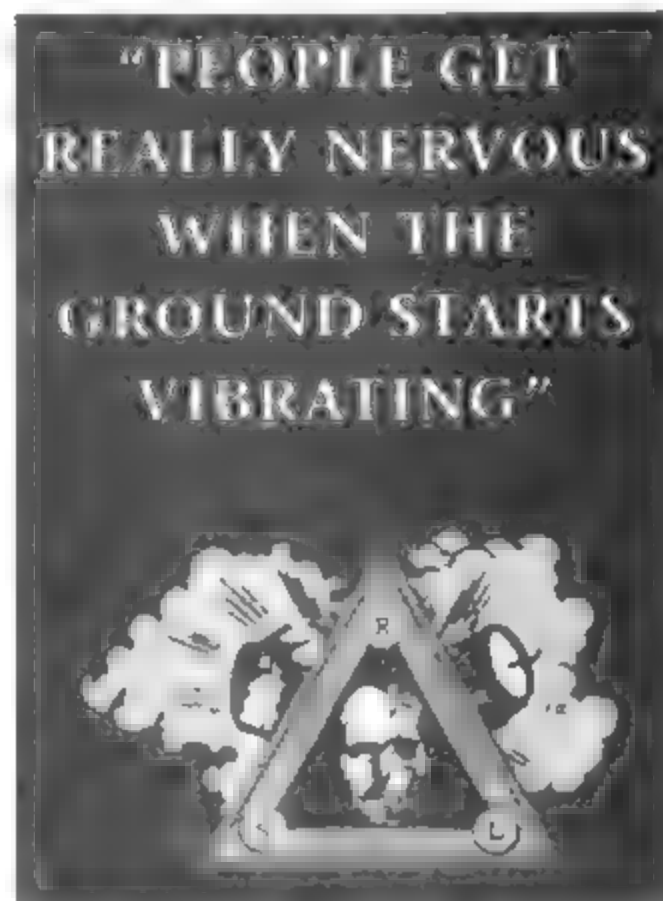
*How did working on the film Bitter Message of Hopeless Grief differ from doing the tapes, which are documentaries?*

There's a lot less pressure in doing a film like that because you have time and oppor-

tunity to do things over. If something didn't function 100% we could do it again. That's a luxury that we don't have in the performances. One little wire can short out and cause a machine to go down—but there's no time to deal with that in a live situation. I'd love to do another film, provided that it was professionally done. Considering the time and money we had, Jon Reiss made *Message* as professionally as possible—and it turned out really well. I still haven't gotten my money back on it, but that's a distribution problem. If anyone had an idea, I'd consider it.

*But the machines must soak up a lot of money, so how does SRL stay afloat financially?*

I've never gotten a grant from the NEA, but last year we got some cash from the US Information Agency, which is basically the CIA. It's this weird agency that's involved in promoting the image of America abroad—so it was a grant specifically for Americans to leave the country to do shows in other countries. They gave us \$7,000—that's the first time we got a federal grant and it was to leave the country. We hadn't gotten any money for 2 or 3 years. Usually we'll get some funding, do some really crazy shows and then everyone will go, "Yikes!" We did some really killer shows back in '89 and really made a lot of people mad—especially people who gave us funding.



**SRL is not a one-man operation. As director, Pauline organizes a team of mechanics, computer specialists, machine operators and artists. Pauline is seated at right, facing camera.**





SRL makes every attempt to include the audience in their performances—whether they like it or not. Above: San Franciscans get doused with a rotten garbage puree. Below: The Finger writhes in a massive bonfire.

*Are these people mislead in some way by what they'd seen on the tapes, thought "Hmmm, I can be into that," but actually have absolutely no idea of what they're in for?*

Well, it's one thing to expect it and it's another thing to create this hysteria with bombs going off and whatever else happens—some people get surprised that you can create that kind of uproar. I think the tapes are very fair, but people get really nervous when the ground starts vibrat-

ing. Of course if you keep raising the ante by showing more intense levels of power and organization, then you ultimately run into problems. You start creating different situations—ones that expose more people to what you're doing. In one case last year, the groundbreaking ceremony for the Museum of Modern Art, we shut down the city of San Francisco for about 10 or 15 minutes because of the sound, smoke and general chaos

*Is that stage of panic and false alert a general goal for SRL?*

We went to Austria and did a big show in Gratz that caused the Defense Minister to issue a war alert. You could never predict that it would result in a hysterical panic, but the title of the show was *The Deliberate Evolution of a War Zone*. We kept telling the press about how we had all this military equipment and people were really paranoid about the war only 50 miles away in Bosnia, so I was hoping that something really weird would happen because nobody could really expect the situation we created. The art presenters there have political power like politicians do here so they waived all the safety regulations. The safety people were panicking, but they were forced to give us permission to do whatever we wanted. The presenters just brushed them off, saying, "Well, thank you for your opinion." They also set us up with the high explosives we needed for the show—anything we wanted. Yeah, it was really weird, but it always happens like that in Europe. We had machines that sounded like squadrons of bombers, I mean they specifically sounded like that. You could hear it from miles away. Then the V-1 and all these explosions started going off, so it really did sound exactly like a war zone—like an air strike. So during the show, hundreds of people called the police to say the Serbs were bombing Gratz. The police said, "No, it's just an art performance." But the callers didn't believe it and called the Defense Department in Vienna. According to the newspaper, maybe 50 people got through to the Defense Minister's office and he immediately declared an alert. A squad of military police swarmed up and got there right before the show was over, creating this weird panic situation. People were really upset for a few days after that.

*Most of the machines are obviously pieced together from what you have on hand or can obtain, but where does something as specialized as the V-1 come from?*

I got plans from a physicist who heard we were trying to make these sounds with sirens and big whistles and stuff like that. So he called us up and said "You should just make these V-1 rocket engines, they have really nice low frequency—really safe, really loud. You can hear it from 20 miles away. I've got the plans right here." He handed us these old yellowed papers he got years ago from the Army that describe in detail how the engine is made, how it works—all the dimensions and technical data. So we built it. We ran it on the first anniversary of the of the 1989 earthquake. It was really funny, we put it out in the yard, fired it for 2 or 3 minutes, then parked it back up in the yard



**The Big Arm, which moves slowly in a debilitated manner, is a major SRL player capable of lifting several thousand pounds in its hydraulic maw.**

right up next to the shop and hid. We have a video camera with a remote control tilt-pan, so we all watched as the fire department and the police came in, looked at the V-1 and said "Oh, it's still hot, but there's no black mark on the wall." The fire marshals came by a couple of days later and said "Look, you can't run this thing." So I said "Oh, do I have to do to get a permit, a noise permit?" And he said "No, what people are really complaining about are the vibrations." So I said, "Where do I get a permit for vibration?" and they said "I guess there really isn't one for that." There was no law against it either, so one of them just said "Well, you can run it but you have to call me first." And I said, "OK."

*In some of the earlier tapes, the machines were more like vehicles in that some had human drivers. Have you experimented much in that direction?*

Eric Werner made one machine like that, the Ramcar, but that's really not what SRL is about. The key idea is to play out these scenarios, live, in front of an audience with only the machines—specifically without people. Also, the potential is much higher for someone to get hurt and that's something to consider and avoid.

*Some machines that have stronger personalities than others. How is it decided when to retire a certain machine or cannibalize it for spare parts?*

Well, they don't all get cannibalized. Some of the real old ones, they're pretty much retired, but even in the early days they were built with pretty high standards. We just dust 'em off and get them working again. But some, like the big Shock Wave Cannon, were based on large amounts of high explosives—so they probably won't be of much use anymore. Maybe I'm just not personally as interested in large amounts of high explosives. And also, you get a much more intense effect out of the V-1, and the police can't come and say, "Well you can't use that, it violates a law, but we're not sure which one." We're trying to evolve away from things that use high explosives or raw gasoline.

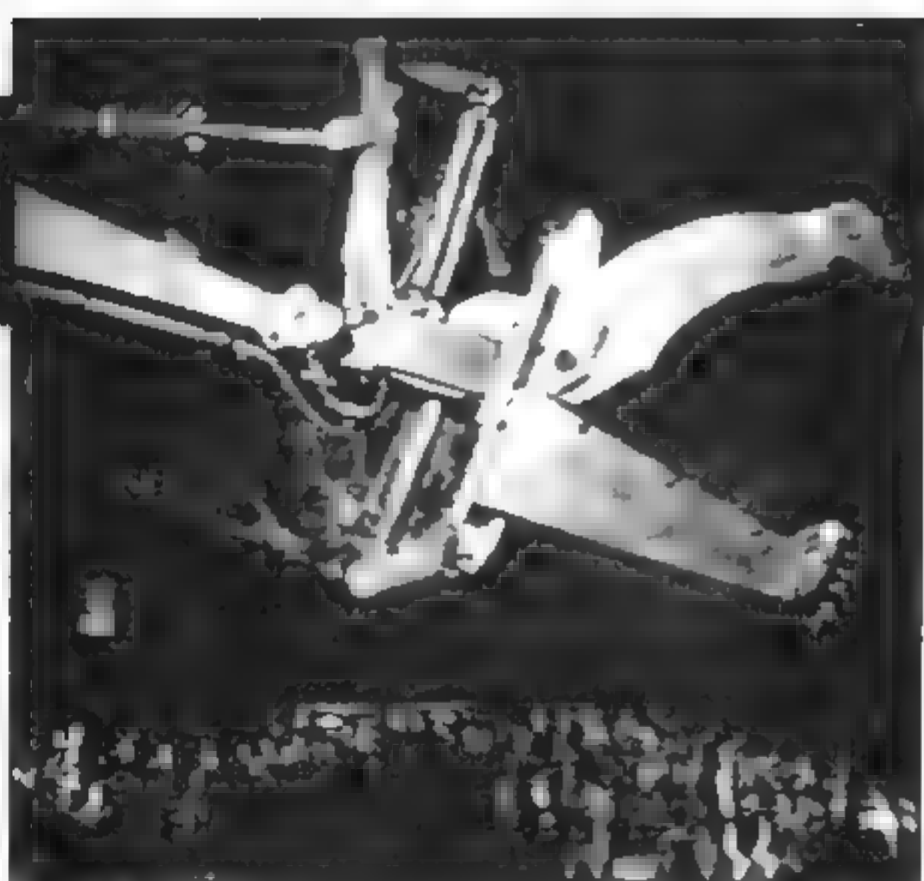
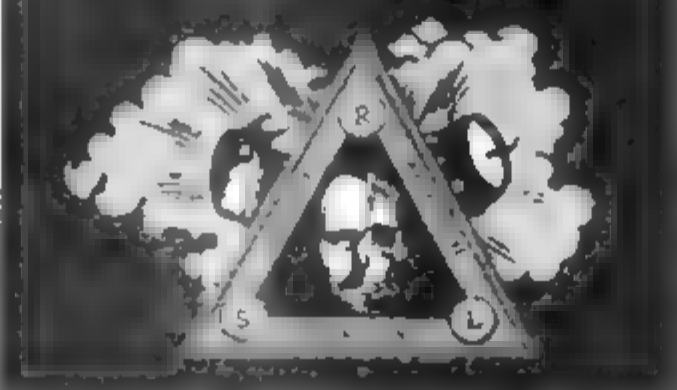
*How many more people do you think have seen your shows as a result of the videos?*

We were getting a few thousand people before there were any videos, 1982, '83, but on the other hand it's much harder for us to do shows here in the United States. If anything the videos probably make it more difficult for us to get promoters because all they're going to see are problems—police problems, fire problems and such. They also show that we kind of think they're funny.

*What's on the SRL parts list, is there anything you're out shopping for?*

I'm trying to find someone who'll give me the details of a pulse detonation engine. It's a new thing NASA is working on for the next generation of fighter jets, although they say it's research for the National Space Plane. Essentially it's an engine with no moving parts—more like a controlled series of explosions that are directed in a way that would propel an aircraft—like a rocket but more powerful. Of course that's all "top secret," but you never know.

**"MAYBE I'M JUST  
NOT PERSONALLY  
AS INTERESTED IN  
LARGE AMOUNTS  
OF HIGH  
EXPLOSIVES"**



*Do you dream about the hardware you could pick up on battlefields—like Kuwait or Iraq?*

Well, when I was in Eastern Europe I spent a couple weeks between the shows driving around and we got ourselves into some really touchy situations in northern Bosnia and far-eastern Croatia. We went up to where the old arms factories are, out on the military bases, and I mean literally, they have rockets out there that you can take. There were just piles of them—all filled with really high explosive fuel and fully operational. There's no security there. We were on one base stripping parts from armored personal carriers—all Soviet stuff—and the guards just waved at us. They didn't even come see what we were doing—didn't care.

*What kind of car do you drive?*

A white, '85 Honda Accord. Someone gave it to me and I fixed it up pretty funky, with dirt and grease all over it. The only modification is a really quiet muffler. I don't like to draw too much attention to myself—especially when I'm out scouting for parts. But I've never been much into cars. They're just not very special. I've always felt that the people who drive really nice cars should have to get a "dent inspection"—someone would come and put a big smash in it and have it inspected by the state so they couldn't tantalize people with their nice cars. I thought I could open a place called "Scars For Cars," an outlet where you could get customized dents. I haven't found any investors yet. **[FTR]**

*Pauline will consider any serious film proposal involving SRL. Send to: SRL Film, 1458-C San Bruno Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110*

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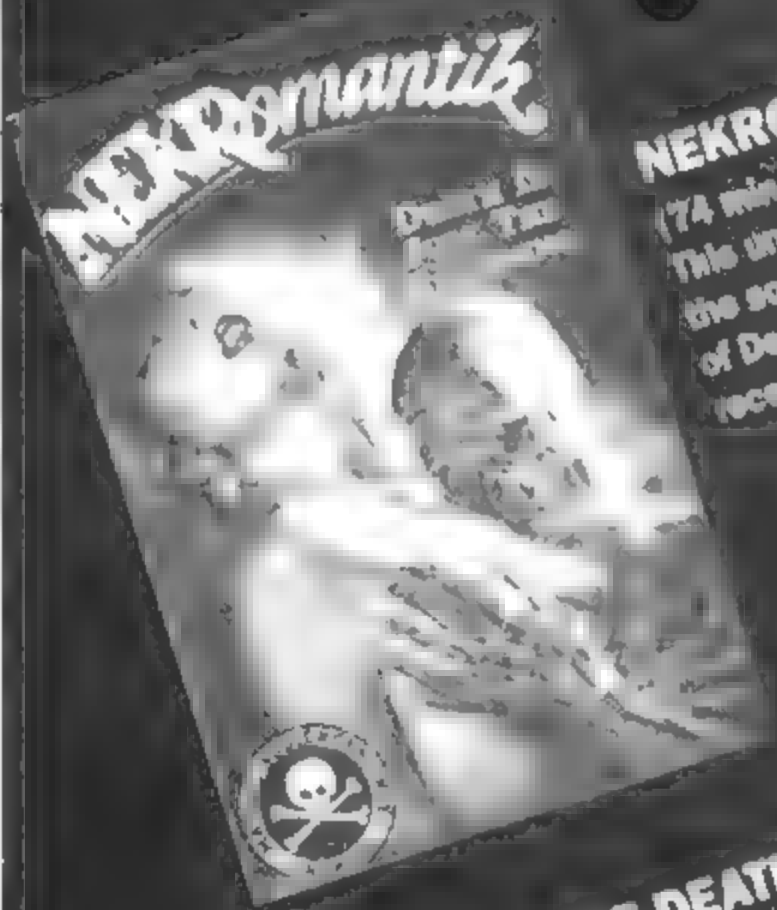


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LURKING IN THE  
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JÖRG BUTTGEREIT  
IS A DARK SENSE  
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AUDIENCES CAN'T  
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**CAN YOU?!**



## NEKROMANTIK

(74 min./English subtitles)  
This uncut, necro-classic is an absolute 10 on  
the squirm-o-meter as the disenfranchised youth  
of Deutschland find inventive uses for the not-so-  
recently-deceased. Oddly, it's a love story too.

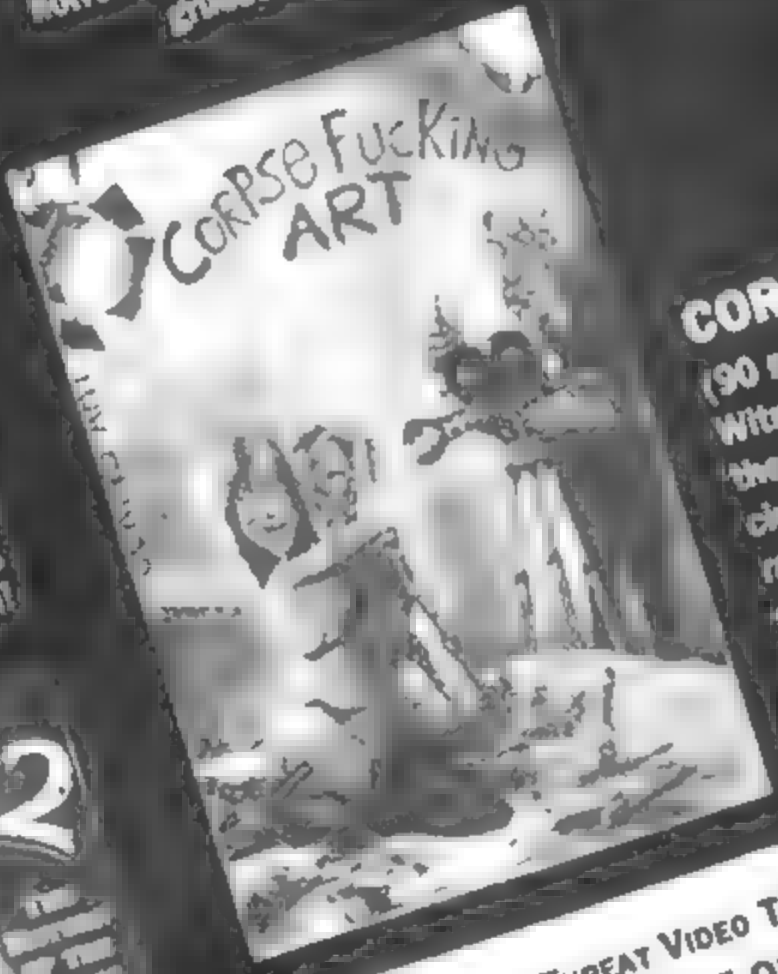
## The Death King

(Dead Todeking)



## THE DEATH KING

(80 min./English subtitles)  
7 suicides in 7 days make for a week of bizarre  
horror from director Jörg Buttgeroit. Features a  
gruesome Nazi torture scene that's not  
for the squeamish!



## CORPSE FUCKING ART

## CORPSE FUCKING ART

(90 min./in English)  
Witness through in-depth interviews and behind-  
the-scenes footage how the Buttgeroit  
cinematrocities were created—complete with  
rare stills, gore effects secrets and unreleased  
scenes. Also includes Hot Love, the pre-  
Nekromantik shocker!

## NEKROMANTIK 2

(100 min./English subtitles)  
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On the road to ruin: Little did they know what lay just up ahead...

# RED ASPHALT REVISITED

by Ralph Coon

**THE LAST PROM, OPTIONS TO LIVE, HIGHWAY OF AGONY**—*Take a runaway ride down memory lane with this complete guide to the horrific, yesteryear world of driver's training films.*

**O**stensibly taught by professionals, drivers' education is often especially in rural area school systems, instructed by gym teachers. During the winter months of their sophomore year, high school students are yanked off the playing fields and placed in darkened classrooms, watching with trepidation as a scratched and brittle 16mm film noisily travels through a projector—bringing to the screen a uniquely American learning tradition; the driver's education film.

With the exception of several paragraphs in Re/Search's essential book, *Incredibly Strange Films*, little

**"There is a deadly fascination about a wrecked car. Was it a pretty face that made this gaping, jagged hole in the windshield?"**

—Grim narration from Gene McPherson's classic, *THE LAST PROM*

thing has been written about these celluloid rites of passage. Perhaps because these films didn't travel through commercial channels of distribution and critique, they were largely ignored by "scholarly" studies of film and filmmakers. Today, however, most high-impact, blood and guts driver's ed films are considered archaic. Larger school systems no longer show harsh, reality films—opting instead for more innocuous fare. But there was a time when, if you learned to drive a car via public education, chances were you were subjected to some of the most grisly, bizarre films ever made.



The gaping hole left by a pretty face.

By all accounts, the first form of photographic driver's education teaching aids were black and white stills of car accidents displayed in county fair booths. In some cases, mangled cars involved in traffic fatalities were paraded in front of jovial carnival crowds like some Industrial Age freak show. The presentation of harsh reality in an entertainment setting proved ineffective.

Several years in the late 1940s to early 50s, driver's ed motion pictures began to appear. Films from this period were usually tame, B&W dramatizations running 20 to 30 minutes in length. *The Last Date* (1950), is an archetypical example as Jeanie, a beautiful young teenager, must choose between two boyfriends: Larry, who always drives courteously and observes the speed limit, or Nick (played by a young Dick York), who drives his "hot-rod" insanely fast. At a high-school dance, Jeanie ditches Larry and slips out unnoticed with Nick for a moonlit drive. As they speed along, a popular disc jockey on the radio urges teenagers not to commit "teenicide, the fine art of killing yourself with an

automobile before you turn 20." The words echo ominously in Jeanie's head as Nick barrels around a corner, smashing into an oncoming car. The film has no credits, listing only the production company, Wilding Picture Productions.

Educators were quick to realize the hokey acting in these early films would massively detract from the intended message. For the hard-to-reach student who routinely scorned authority, *The Last Date* was more than likely reduced to a laughable, high-camp good time, *a la* *Reefer Madness*.

Because of this, toward the end of the 50s, drivers' education pictures became rougher. Much rougher.

The 1958 Canadian film, *Safety or Slaughter*, was among the first to include authentic scenes of highway fatalities. "I'd like to show you a few statistics," comments the film's monotonic narrator. "That man is a statistic. So is that girl. These are real people, just like you and me." The intercut



Meeting the new boyfriend: How's his driving?



Prom night: Dinner, dancing and...



carnage is brief, but effective.

In the following year, Dick Wyman, a still photographer from Mansfield, Ohio, lost a friend to an automobile accident and decided to use his skills to help prevent further loss of life.

Purchasing primitive 16mm equipment, he began riding around in the back of ambulances working in and around the Mansfield area, photographing real auto accident victims in their tragic surroundings. Wyman named his first film after the Ohio State Highway Patrol official code for a fatal crash, *Signal 30*.

By the artist's own admission, *Signal 30* is "An ugly film. It is meant to be. It is designed to drive home to those who see it that an accident is not pretty."

Wyman offered the film to schools, civic groups and other like-minded parties. No one seemed interested. Undaunted, he persevered, making several other "crash" pictures.

Still, no one showed interest and his films

sat on the shelf, unappreciated, unwatched, and gathering dust. The novice filmmaker was broke and looking for a way out. It looked as though Wyman's embryonic style of shock therapy-driver's training was terminal before it truly began.

However, in reality, the golden age of driver's education films was about to begin.

Wyman's accountant at the time, Earl J. Deems, made an offer to his employer to purchase the rights to *Signal 30*. However, since Wyman had yet to find a commercial use for his films, Deems needed a strategy to assure he would turn a profit. To lend more credibility to the films, he forged a symbiotic relationship with the Ohio State Highway Patrol. In return for

letting him use their official logo, and occasionally using real officers on screen, Deems gave the Ohio Highway Patrol, free of charge, complete access to his catalog of titles. He even made *A Great And Honorable Duty*, a complementary film highlighting the diverse challenges the Ohio Highway Patrol faces every day. Deems also saw and made use of the lucrative English-speaking overseas market, selling *Signal 30* and future efforts to military installations around the world.



...the bloody face of death.

Deems' ingenious ideas paid off, and in the early 60's he formed his own production company, Highway Safety Films, Inc. Over the next 14 years, Deems churned out 19 of the most hideously authentic crash films ever made, and in the process, became the world's preeminent *auteur* of driving education cinema.

Deems, 71, retired from filmmaking in the early 80's and still resides in Mansfield, Ohio, location of many of his magnum opuses. Even today, some 20 odd years since most of his films were completed, he still receives an occasional phone call from educators searching down him and his movies.

"I just got a call a couple of weeks ago from someone in Illinois looking for a copy of *The Third Killer*," says

Deems in a pleasantly husky voice. (The number one and two causes of death, according to Deems, are heart disease and cancer—the third being traffic accidents.) "People grew up watching my films and now some have become teachers and police officers who now want to show them to their students."

People did indeed grow up watching Deems' work. Three of his films, *Mechanized Death*, *Wheels of Tragedy*, and *Highways of Agony*, are among the most frequently remembered of all driver's ed titles.

"I made those films so long ago that it's hard to recall any specific stories about making them," Deems continues. "However, I do remember this, my cameraman use to ride with ambulances to crash sites and when the paramedics left with the victims, they'd be stuck. I'd have to make arrangements to have them picked up."

Often times, to help illustrate the high price of thoughtless motor-ing, Deems would invite victims to appear on camera. In his 1964 film, *The*

*Unteachables*, a young executive who lost a leg and arm in an accident lectures viewers on unsafe driving habits. This effective device was recycled in the 1983 film, *Kevin's Story*. Kevin Tunall, an 18 year old drunk driver convicted in the death of a young girl, was sentenced to spend two years speaking to youths, warning of carelessness with alcohol. Predominantly psychological in nature and free of twisted metal and torn flesh, *Kevin's Story* is a staple of most high school film libraries.

Deems declined to discuss the budgets of his films. He would say, however, that when actors were needed for films like *Wheels of Tragedy*, one of his few that relied on reenactments, he settled for amateur performers from

surrounding dinner cheaters.

As he became more successful, Deems widened the breadth of his films to include such topics as bank robbery, shoplifting, child molestation and check forgery. In his 1964 bank job picture, *You and the Bank Robber*, Deems included footage of an actual hold-up as captured by ceiling security cameras, a then-innovative practice commonly used today by producers of such sensationalistic programs as *America's Most*

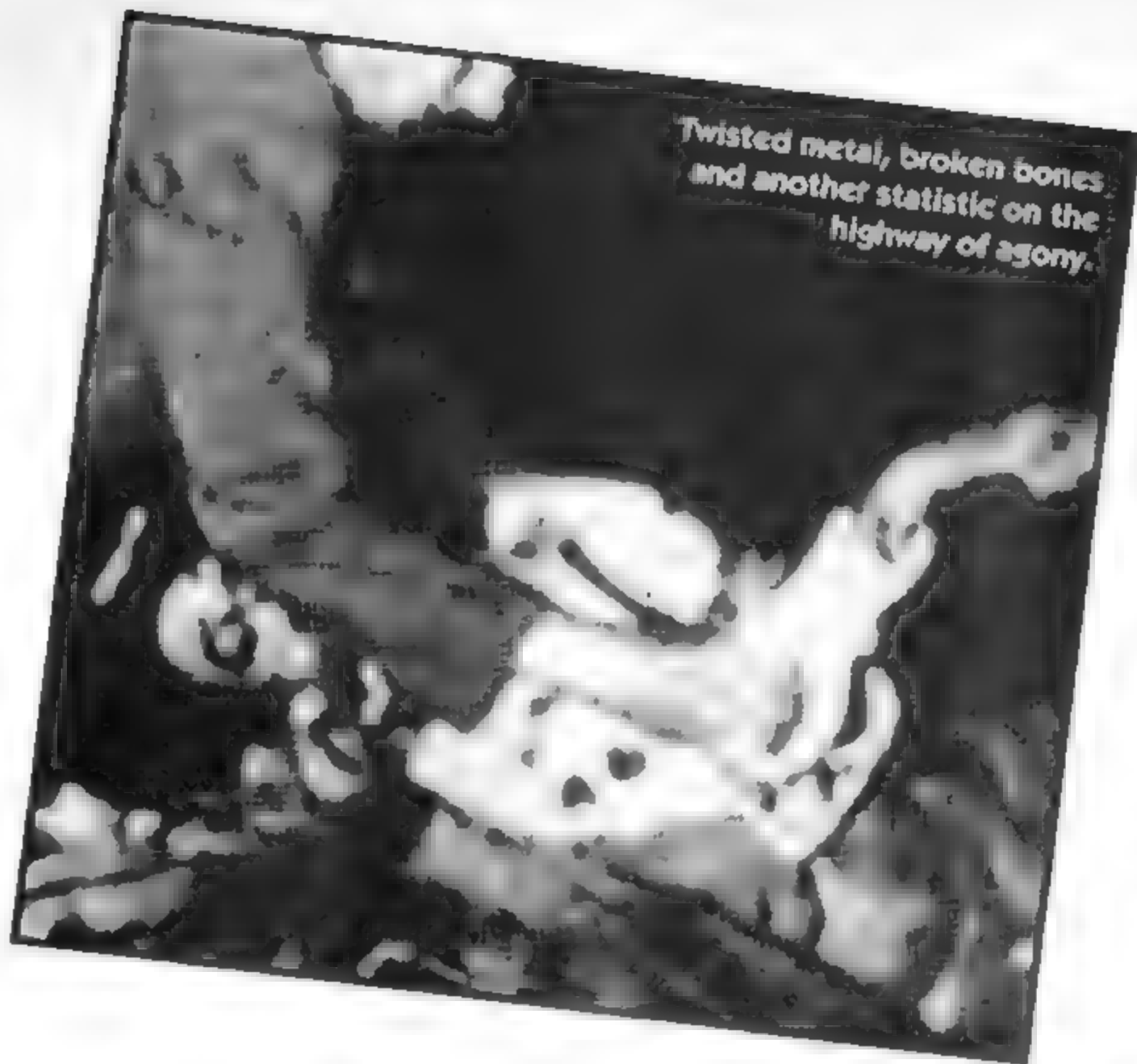
*Wanted* and *Rescue 911*. In *The Child Molester*, Deems, true to form, educates school children of the dangers of talking to strangers by employing authentic footage of police recovering the remains of two young girls murdered by a convicted molester.

Deems curtly disowns these films. "They were terrible, terrible—and I don't even have prints of them anymore." Unhappy with his temporary foray from the crash genre, he quickly returned.

*Drive To Survive* and *A Matter of Judgement* were among his next films. In them, he continued to include his idiomatic combination of gore and purple-prose narration. "This young teenager tried to outrun a train. Now he won't ever outrun anything again," pronounces an overbearing narrator while on-screen rescue workers pry a mutilated corpse from the aftermath of an automobile/locomotive collision.

Deems swears that few, if any, complained of his macabre teaching tactics. "Most people I heard from told me, 'Way to go!'"

However, Deems is quick to point out he knew where to draw the line. "I left some footage out. There was no reason to show a decapitation. What



countless highway traffic accidents, telling you and showing you like it really is. We've included some of the most shocking scenes ever put on motion picture film. We have shown you the injured, the dying, and the dead. Do you remember this?" The film cuts to images of a truck driver impaled against his steering wheel, expired drivers curled up on asphalt—catapulted hundreds of feet from their vehicles—accident scenes where it is

impossible to distinguish car from driver.

"Now I'll bet you remember us," the narrator concludes triumphantly.

Without a doubt, *Options to Live* is the cataclysmic apex of this genre, for in it, Deems utilizes a new technique, one that could shock even the most hardened of viewers; the actual sounds of an automobile accident.

Moans of the dying drowned out by the shriek of sirens dot the film's soundtrack. "My legs, my legs!" one woman screams after noticing her nearly severed limbs lying next to her.

With the marriage of sound and visual, Deems may have very well taken his brand of shock therapy over the top. Soon after the release of *Options to Live*, Highway Safety Films, Inc.'s activities mysteriously ceased. Rumors circulated that the company was forced out of business due to legal complications from auto accident victims appearing in Deems' films who were seeking a cut of the profits.

The truth was that in 1980-81 Deems shot footage for one final film, tentatively titled, *Strategies For Safe Driving*. While editing the picture in 1983, his wife, long struggling against

**"They were terrible, terrible—and I don't even have prints of them anymore."**

*—Earl J. Deems curtly disowning his own films.*



would the point of that be? In those cases I just lingered on the mangled automobile."

In 1979, Deems completed his last film, *Options to Live*, an obvious swan song, reaffirming his legacy as one of the founders of realism-based driver's education films. "We're Highway Safety Films, Inc.," a narrator seated in an editing room informs us. "Since 1959 we've taken you to the scenes of

cancer, suddenly passed away. Deems shelved *Strategies For Safe Driving*, deciding to retire.

"I always felt we were doing a big service," says Deems, musing about his involvement with filmmaking. "There certainly was a big demand for those sorts of films."

Sadly, Deems may be the sole curator of his films. Having found their vernacular and/or teaching value sorely dated, most school systems and police departments have removed Deems' films from their catalogs. Even the National Safety Council, a non-profit organization designed to promote and distribute instructional safety films, has categorized Deems' films as "dead storage," packing them away in basements and storage areas across the country—more than likely never to see the light of a projector bulb again. Videophiles have long been circulating

to music, was among their first works. However, so strong was the demand for Deems' old films that a series of remakes were planned. According to a source within the department (who declined to be identified), a sequel to *Signal 30* was shot several years ago but never completed as a new regime took over and dismissed the project—opting instead to make a *Batman* parody entitled *Buckleman*. Buckleman drives around in his bucklemobile and shoots people not wearing safety belts with his bucklegun, immediately strapping them in.

Unlike the Ohio Highway Patrol, few state police departments possess the available funding to produce their own educational films. Most rely on slide presentations featuring local traffic accidents. Nonetheless, there are exceptions. The California Highway Patrol has been producing films since

finding the footage," added Milton, now with the National Highway and Traffic Administration. "That's why it took so long. Most of the time they'd get there late and the victims would be gone. How many films can you make about two wrecked cars?"

The film's apt title was derived from the opening scene revealing a corpse laying next to a battered car, his blood trickling down the blacktop roadway. After that initial opening, no other highway death is depicted, for like Deems' *The Unteachables*, *Red Asphalt* focuses on the consequences of an automobile accidents. Maimed and mutilated crash victims are shown carted into ambulances, their lives forever changed. The film proved such a success that two sequels were made, *Red Asphalt II* and *Red Asphalt III*. According to Steve Kohler, Executive Producer of *Red Asphalt III*, the

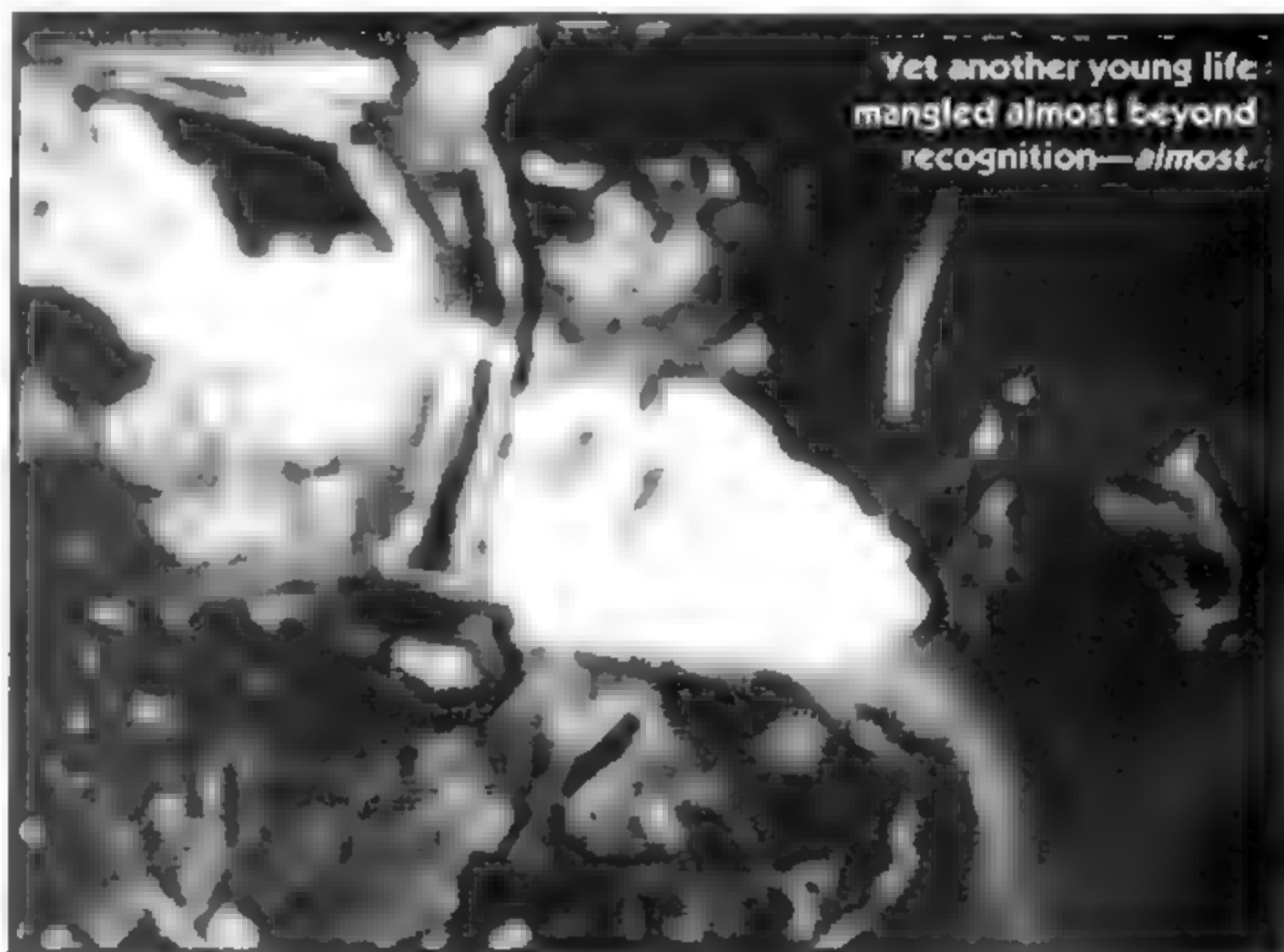
**"An ugly film. It is meant to be. It is designed to drive home to those who see it that an accident is not pretty."**

—Dick Wyman on his pioneering effort *SIGNAL 30*



copies of Deems' more notorious films amongst themselves. This is of little consolation considering most are poorly dubbed, 8th and 9th generation copies and are, for the most part, unwatchable.

Once Deems retired from filmmaking, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, now without its supplier of films, created an internal media division to produce and direct their own films. *End Result*, a collage of fatal accidents set



the late 60s. Their first production, *Red Asphalt*, is perhaps the most infamous of all driving education films.

Started in 1965 and finished four years later, *Red Asphalt* was photographed by a now-defunct professional camera club from Hollywood, California, according to the film's producer, Kemp Milton. "The California Highway Patrol paid for film and developing and volunteers from the camera club would be responsible for

California Highway Patrol plans to make a new *Red Asphalt* film every ten years.

Because most blood 'n guts realism driver's ed films were nothing more than a compilation of highway accidents, little if any understanding of filmic techniques were needed to make them. Simply point and shoot. Dramatized efforts were the arena for displaying cinematic vision, and, sadly, few lived up to the challenge. A note-



worthy exception was *The Last Prom*, produced and directed by Gene McPherson.

*Prom* opens with a shot of a demolished car resting in front of a small town high school. "There is a deadly fascination about a wrecked car," the narrator tells us as the camera cuts to the car's blood smeared windshield. "Was it a pretty face that made this gaping, jagged hole in the windshield?"

The film dissolves into a flashback, telling the story of Bill Donovan, a "good boy, but a bad driver," who attends his high school prom with friend, Sandy Clark. Following the motif of most "date" driver's ed pictures, Bill and Sandy, along with two friends, leave the dance early to go for an innocent drive. Speeding carelessly along, Bill plows into a tree, hurling Sandy through the windshield, killing her.

Using hand held camera and washed-out, single source cinematography, McPherson twists his obvious budgetary inadequacies to his advantage, creating a pseudo-documentary that chillingly makes its point without ever once exploiting a real life tragedy.

Originally shot in black and white in 1963, *The Last Prom* was remade in color in 1968 and then again in 1980. All three versions were produced and directed by McPherson from his own script, with only the 1980 version differing by having the teenagers driving a van and drinking alcohol. Of the three, the first remake remains McPherson's favorite. "When we made the third version the budget was considerably higher and a much larger crew participated," McPherson said. "The last version somehow lacked the impact of the earlier versions which were simply made by a news team trying to stretch their film hori-



Stern words of warning in *Options to Live*.

zons a little beyond routine day to day coverage."

McPherson, then Vice President of News and Special Projects for a small group of Ohio TV stations, made the 1968 version of *The Last Prom* for \$5,000 with a skeleton crew consisting of his news staff cameraman, sound man and film editor. He also enlisted the choir department of a local high school to help write and perform the film's creepy *a cappella* score. The final result is a stunning, highly effective film, as eerie as any good low budget hor-

ror film, and should be considered required viewing by aficionados of the genre.

With the exception of Earl J. Deems' pictures, most driver's education films lie in public domain—antiquated strips of celluloid all but forgotten. Surely there must be a suitable protege lurking out there somewhere who can appreciate the commercial possibilities in finding and resurrecting these gems of nostalgia.

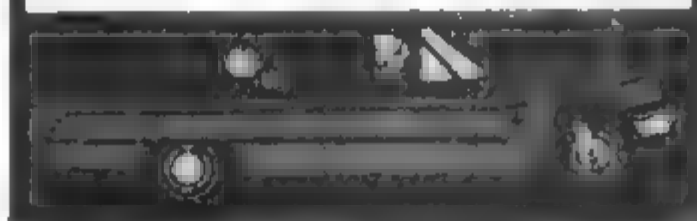
With the videocassette reissue of the "drug menace" films of the 30s, pictures like *Reefer Madness*, *The Devil's Weed*, and *Cocaine Fiends* have become cult favorites of alternative video stores. Likewise, recent theatrical releases like *Atomic Cafe*, *Radio Bikini*, and *Heavy Petting*, have rekindled interest in 1950s era propaganda and educational films. Could a film juxtaposing the crimson imagery of *Red Asphalt* with the sheer corniness of *The Last Prom* be far off?

Is the world ready? **DM**

Ralph Coon is the editor of *The Last Prom*, an exhaustive 'zine that investigates the world of modern esoterica. The latest issue, featuring hypnotic televangelist Dr. Gene Scott is available for \$4.50 ppd from 137 Fernando Blvd., #243, Burbank, CA 91402

"Since 1959 we've taken you to the scenes of countless highway traffic accidents, telling you and showing you like it really is. We've included some of the most shocking scenes ever put on motion picture film."

—Narration from Deems' *Options to Live*





# REAL MEAT PUPPETS

*One man's tale of meat, madness and  
grotesque methodology.*

*by Randall Phillip*



*Editor's Note: While researching stories for this issue, I chanced upon a letter sent to Survival Research Laboratories by the author, Randall Phillip. In it, he proposed to SRL Director Mark Pauline that they work together on a joint "human animation" project—with SRL supplying the mechanics and he the requisite cadavers. Pauline was intrigued, but ultimately pulled out due to various creative differences. I quickly contacted Mr. Phillip and asked him to explain exactly what he was up to. After several letters, he responded with the following essay. Obviously, his opinions and activities in no way reflect the those of SRL or this publication. He's on his own!*

**W**HAT WAS accomplished by animating the dead? (Some say "reanimating," but I say never animated to begin with, since people walking around are dead.) Such a thing was done to see what dynamics would occur, and to serve as a comparison to the "living." That is, the dead who give all the appearances of life—the automata. We, being dead, are in a limbo where we are both living and dead. It's time to face the facts: We're dead. We are employed in the physical mechanical. To say it another way—we occupy our bodies. The difference between those who are living and those who are dead are often not distinct. Like when so-called "living" people are at their lowest energy levels or when they just don't care about anything,

or when they're being controlled by forces greater than themselves. At these times, people either lazily choose or are forced to succumb to automatic responses. They possess all the qualities of life, yet, it's just the superficial ambience of life. The majority of human beings go through their entire existence like this. Just look in the mirror, or walk out the door. Check out your local shopping mall or business district. Take a look at your politicians—the status quo—your mom and dad.



**Unfortunately, this poker game was broken up.**

## THE GAME

This was my first attempt at animating the dead. This Halloween window display at the San Jose Fairmont Hotel was occasionally brought to life by me making the skeletons play poker using fishing line wire connected to pieces of wood. This lasted 10 days until I offhandedly commented that the skeletons were real and not made of plastic. The hotel management immediately had me dismantle the display before Halloween

arrived. They, in their worm-like wisdom, thought it was in bad taste to publically display human remains in such circumstance, as well as probably illegal, and that I had overstepped my bounds. Whereas a week before they had congratulated me for such a good job at setting up an entertaining window display, now, they wanted no scandal. I was paid in full and dismissed. Oh, well!

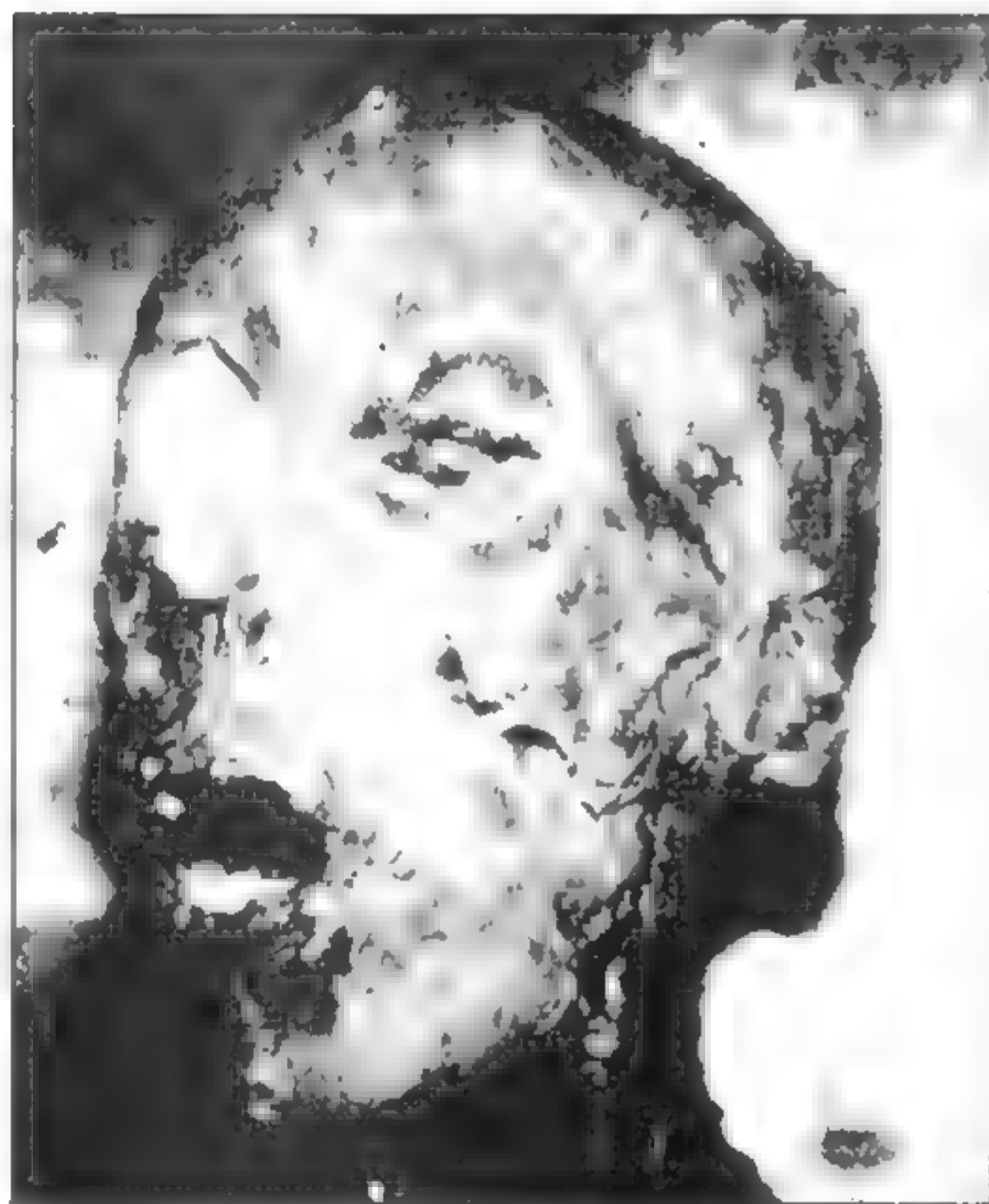
## CORPSEY, MY FAVORITE VENTRILOQUIST DUMMY

Our act was standard: I was the nude straight man, while Corpsey cracked jokes about driving a red Ford Mustang into an Eagles football game and running over the players. And describing how a car is a metal coffin on wheels with machinery for high scoring bodycounts worth at least a 7 point touchdown, etc., etc. Since Corpsey had no arms, I was required to feed him the corn chips he demanded. Since Corpsey could not move his mouth, I spit chewed up food at him and washed it down his throat. That was about the extent of the act, which was videotaped. Sadly, Corpsey was painfully surrendered, under threat of police involvement. This was my own fault for trusting close friends to keep their mouths shut. In the midst of the enthusiasm of having such a treasure as Corpsey it was hard to contain a secret. The videotape was shown without my knowledge to somebody who was thought to be okay. He turned out to be a closet do-gooder, who called me a sick asshole, and informed the place from whence I rescued Corpsey from. As I previously stated, they threatened police involvement. I at that time had encountered police twice previously that week for other instances. So, I surrendered Corpsey to people with so-called "right" ideas about what to do with a corpse. Such people who've been described here for fouling me up with their worm-like minds cannot be despised enough. Sad to say, the videotape of my act was subsequently destroyed to avoid further problems.

The worst ventriloquist can make a corpse talk if he or she has got the desire. It is the ventriloquist's inner demon

## CORPSE MARIONETTES

This *tour de force* involved many dedicated and enthusiastic persons. Allegiances with individuals (who requested to remain anonymous) were made and kept in confidence. Motivated puppeteers and members of the medical profession whose zeal was not limited by imposed ethical restrictions. This even was not really planned out. As the opportunity for an unmonitored dance of death was at hand, all persons involved converged at the meeting spot. The "living" man on the table had happily consented to being anesthetized, as the cadavers, in various stages of dissection and decomposition, played doctor on him. Life for these dead was achieved by a most primitive means: The puppeteers (Gods if you will) manipulated the cadavers from above on a quickly made construction. Wire cords were attached to the bones and muscles of the cadavers. At one point, an attached hook ripped off one of the arms of a corpse marionette. The corpse and its arm dangling in mid-air danced around separate from each other.



Corpsey was ultimately rescued and returned to those with the "right ideas" about what to do with a corpse



The doctors are in (and on strings): A ghastly *tour de force*.

Why am I disclosing this information on animating the dead? The time has come when I don't give a shit for stupid folks and their stupid opinions. The time has come when I do give a shit about myself and what I do. I will do more than survive. **[END]**

Mr. Phillip can be contacted by interested parties at:  
PO Box 2217, Philadelphia, PA 19103.



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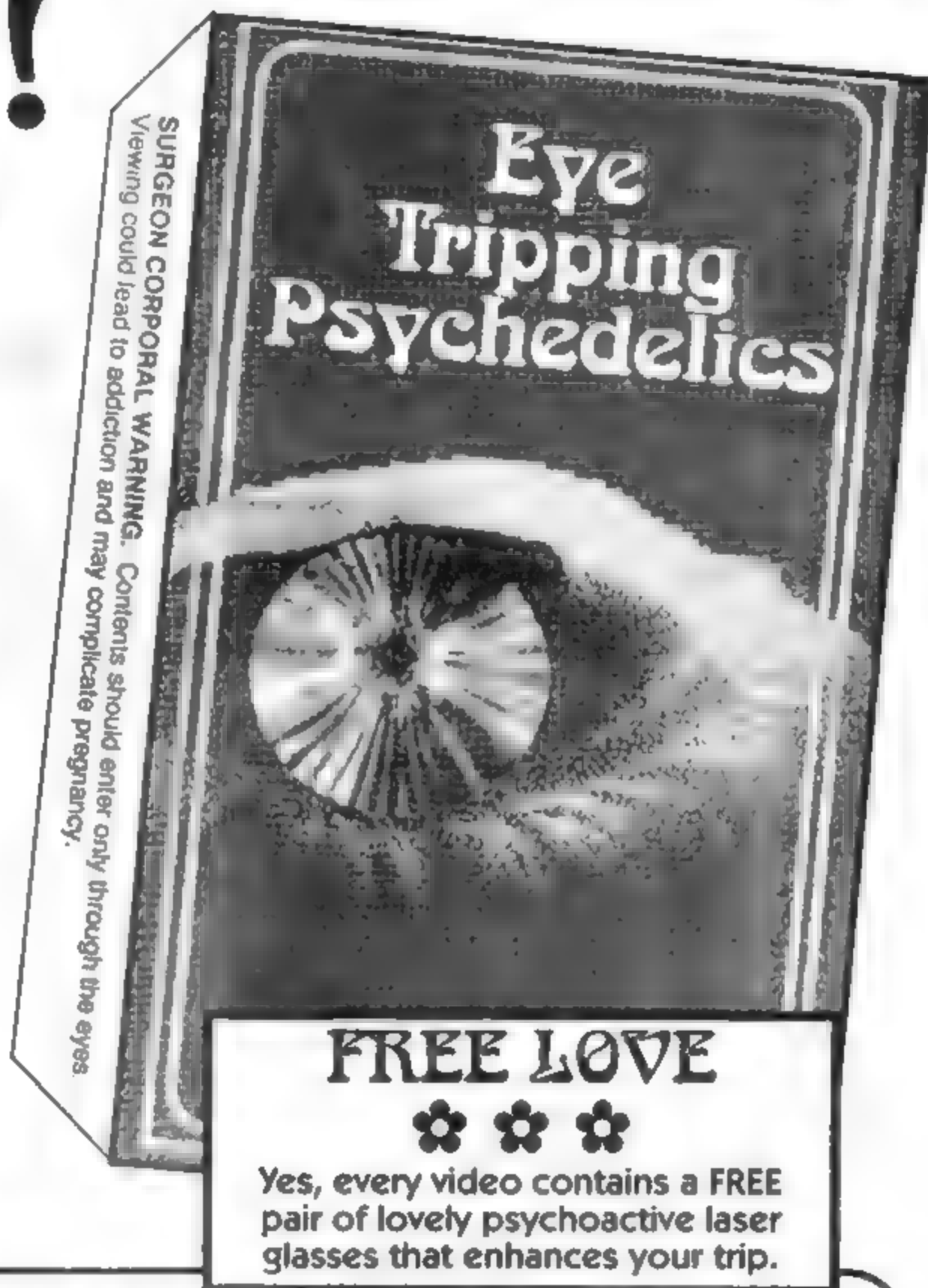
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**FILM  
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# San Francisco

## THE

# MOVIEMAKER'S

# MECCA

by Danny Plotnick

*The complete lowdown on the independent scene in San Francisco—a town with a flyer for some kind of aberrant film show on every telephone pole.*

**L**OS ANGELES GETS the nod when it comes to popping out bloated 70mm films with budgets the size of India's GNP, and UCLA/USC-style student films as vacuous as any of Tri-Star's latest releases. On the other coast, New York allows any halfwit with a camera to get recognized based solely on the fact that they're an artist from New York. However, San Francisco has got the goods when it comes to making, showcasing and distributing films of all formats, angles and attitudes that could be construed as independent. With a quick glance at the breadth of filmmaking emerging from San Francisco, one quickly realizes that lumping all the city's work under the blanket term

"independent" is lazy at best. One of the most refreshing aspects of this city's film scene is the shockingly diversity amongst the films and filmmakers.

As any SF-based filmmaker knows, the most common and misguided question they'll ever be asked is, "Why don't you move to L.A.?" Well, "Hollywood be dammed," the obvious answer (though not so obvious to someone who thinks *sex, lies & videotape* embodies the cutting edge) is that "Los Angeles" and "Film" are by no means synonymous. There's a whole different world out there with its own set of values, expectations and audience. And don't think of independent film as a substitute for the real thing

Think of it as your weird cousin who moved to Alaska, mined for gold, made a million, lost all his money in a poker game and gives your dad heartburn. Making films does not mean having to play the Hollywood game; it means making up your own game and playing by your own set of rules. And in San Francisco, the rules of the game are, "There are no rules." From found footage films to highly experimental works to independent features, to social documentaries, to smelly 8mm masterpieces, to optically-printed flights of fancy to video experimentation; the entire range of filmmaking is represented here in top notch form by people who are at the top of their game and on edge of "indie" film.



## THE NETWORK

This scene is able to thrive here due to a complex web of organizations, movie houses and universities that focus on non-mainstream film. While many of these resources focus on a particular style or camp of filmmaking, all work with each other to develop a cohesive, rather than competitive, community. The number of spaces that regularly show films and the cooperation between individual groups and affiliations allow for filmmakers here to not worry about audiences and allow them to experiment from style to style without fear of alienating their supportive constituency. All of this avoids the problem of artistic typecasting and add up to some downright diverse and (sometimes) groundbreaking work.

To understand how this divergent set of filmmakers works as a community, one need look no farther than The Film Arts Foundation (FAF), northern California's primary resource center and the one-stop shopping place for Bay Area filmmakers. If every artform in every city had an organization as thoroughly committed and downright ass-kickin' as San Francisco's FAF, then the world would be overflowin' with art good enough to wage war with.

FAF operates at all levels of the filmmaking game. They function as a library complete with a videotape collection of local work, literature, festival listings, distribution catalogs, sample budgets and all that other stuff associated with the paperwork-intensive side of filmmaking. But FAF is more than a library with a really cool staff. They offer year-round seminars on every

## GEORGE KUCHAR: WHILE HE'S NAKED

by Kevin Burke

"...Making movies can be a pretty offensive and humiliating endeavor. But I think it's a lot better than being a creature of the jungles, because whenever I watch documentaries on the natural world it turns my stomach! All these bugs are climbing out of their flakey skins, laying eggs in manure, while these blistered reptiles chomp on gummy bubbles filled with palpitating tadpoles. It is enough to make you sick and appreciate your own obnoxious secretions...be they celluloid or otherwise."

—From *George Kuchar's Tips on Directing*

**O**bnoxious? Never! George Kuchar's "celluloid secretions" are always a welcome relief in a sea of tedium from the Hollywood crap machine. And for a few hundred years of tuition loan slavery you can have George as a professor at The San Francisco Art Institute—boasting the teaching talents of the man who made such classics as *Hold Me While I'm Naked* and starred in the hilarious *Thundercrack!* Kuchar alone is reason enough to enroll today.



Kuchar today.

*How is the current class—what are you making?*

It's about a circus coming to town, the townspeople and their interaction with the circus—kind of a love story. It's a big production, with all this international talent...you know—the students. They alternate in acting, make-up and photography—stuff like that. When we finished, we had a 1 1/2 hours of footage, and it's kind of boring to sit through. But now it looks pretty good!


*How do you handle the editing with that large of a group?*

I can't see how 25 to 30 people can edit one movie, so what I usually do—and I'm ruthless, like Dr. Butcher, at the cutting table—is take the picture, edit it and try to make it as presentable as possible. But one girl asked me about it, and I said 'Well, the stuff is in my bedroom, and I'm not allowed to have students in my bedroom.' Then I said, 'And I walk around the house naked. You know what I mean, like, it's my house—I'm naked.' The thought of that was so horrible to her that she actually got offended. But it's not *that* bad, you know, I'm not that bad naked. But that look on her face...

*Do you think film schools are good?*

Sometimes it's a positive experience in that you meet people. But if you have friends in the outside world that know a little bit of the ropes like where to mail off films to get processed and you have some kind of feedback, then that's very good schooling itself. I never did go to a film school. I just graduated high school. Mainly, you buy a camera and you read the instruction book. But, ah, school is just some place you go.

*Have you ever been offered a chance to sell out to Hollywood?*

Well, I remember Paramount called me at the school 'cause I had gotten a good review for a show I did in L.A. It seemed, I don't know, hideous. I don't know what was wrong. You see, I can't work too well, professionally. My mind is a mess, and I don't like meetings too much. Besides, I'd feel bad if I took other people's money and the film was a disaster. But they wanted me to send films. I did, and they sent it back real fast by special courier with a "No thank you." I was kind of relieved. 



Kuchar in *THUNDERCRACK!*

aspect of filmmaking you could hope for: sound, lighting, 16mm, Super 8, optical printing, editing, AB rolling, preparing your taxes and more.

Most of these classes are headed by local filmmakers who specialize in a given area (e.g. Craig Baldwin teaches a found-footage workshop) and also by out-of-towners with a reputation (e.g. Brodsky & Treadway handle Super 8). This mix of instructors helps validate S.F.'s place in the indie film world by making it a stopping place for national talent as well as placing local stalwarts on equal footing with more recognized (though not necessarily more talented) figures.

But the fun doesn't stop there. In addition to showcasing local work in a series of festivals, FAF boasts a full scale edit facility for 16mm and Super 8 and also rents out a variety of camera, lighting and sound hardware at prices that would please your miserly father.

## ADVENTUROUS VENUES

Whereas most cities might have one or at best two venues with a somewhat regular schedule of film shows, San Francisco is loaded with a variety of spaces that showcase a variety of styles. So not only are film hounds exposed to a range of work from around the globe, but the filmmakers themselves aren't required to fight each other over limited screen time—or able to moan about how there's no place interested in their particular kind of filmmaking. The four heaviest-hitting venues are the Artist's Television Access (ATA), The San Francisco Cinemateque, FAF and the Pacific Film Archive (PFA), conveniently located across the Bay in Berkeley.

Of the four, the Cinemateque and the PFA run to the more "high brow" side of things, showing a love for both classic and more recent work in the so-

called "experimental" range. Stan Brakhage retrospectives often pepper the Cinemateque schedule, as do works by new figures like Peggy Ahwesh and SF's own Silt Group. The PFA mixes in new experimental works with more conventional films, drawing from their

huge library of unusual titles.

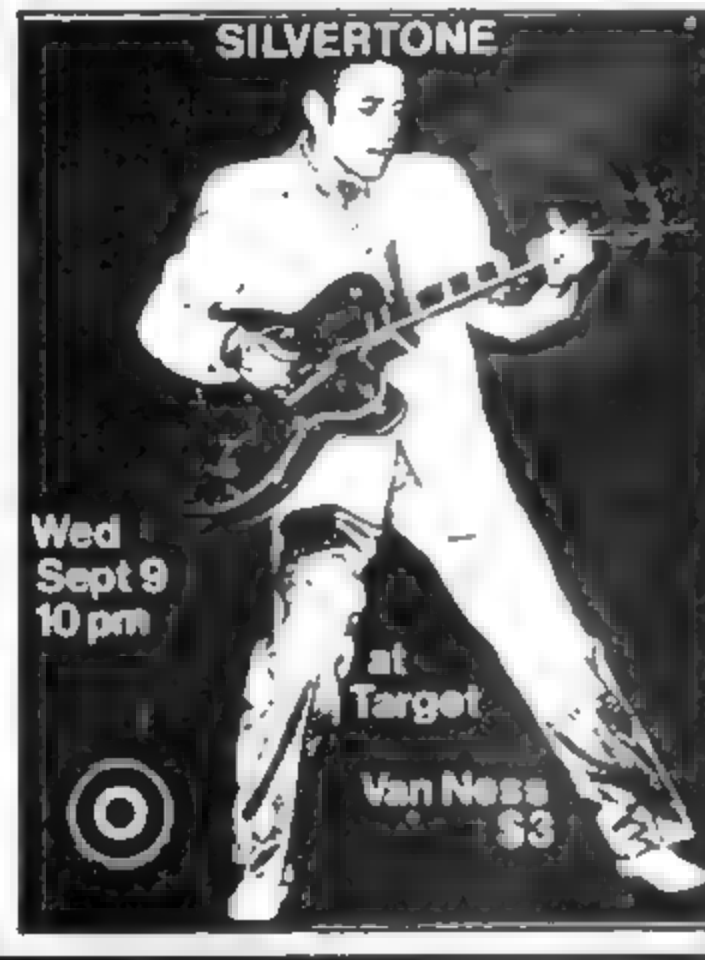
The ATA's Other Cinema series, curated in part by Craig Baldwin [see sidebar], tends to hit a little more below the belt by programming obscure cult and trash culture fare alongside the occasional Antonioni or Sam Fuller flick—proving that the lines of what gets shown where

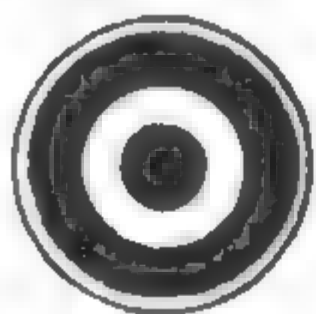
aren't that concretely drawn.

Though these spaces have a particular bent, they show whatever they please, further buying the "anything goes" mentality that is so damn San Francisco. In recent memory, both ATA and Cinemateque have featured the likes of George and Mike Kuchar, Alice Wittenstein, Werner Herzog, Jack Stevenson and Brakhage to name a few. A memorable show at ATA, which screened films of a technological-bent, featured a bunch of mad scientist, SRL renegade-types who built an electrical generator under the screen and convinced the audience to complete a live-wire circuit by joining hands to create and insane an seething electric daisy-chain. Slotted on the most recent Cinemateque bill are a series of shows that will be projected on buildings, markets and homes around town

First-come-first-shown open screenings and work-in-progress previews (in all formats) are regular occurrences at most venues. These events provide plenty of opportunity for emerging filmmakers, not yet in the flow of regular screenings, to strut their stuff. And since many of the open screenings are sponsored by places that have a regular schedule of curated shows, it's easy to jump into a regular calender of events. Also, the open screenings tend

**THEY SHOW WHAT-  
EVER THEY PLEASE,  
FURTHER BUYING  
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GOES" MENTALITY  
THAT IS SO DAMN  
SAN FRANCISCO.**





## JOE REES: WE'RE MISSING THE TARGET

by David E. Williams

Once the most visible videomaker in the Bay Area, Joe Rees and his shoestring-budgeted Target Video operation did more to integrate alternative music and cathode-ray technology during its existence (essentially 1977-86) than the multi-million dollar MTV juggernaut has accomplished within a comparable time frame.

A mutant media force that captured virtually the entire San Francisco punk scene in a 1,200 volume, video time capsule, Target exported the music revolution by way of tape; replaying live shows by the likes of The Avengers, Eye Protection, Crime and The Dils to the uninitiated at parties and later distributing them in compilation form. *Live At Target*, was Rees' first release in 1979, but it was the later *Live At Kezar Throbbing Gristle* video that really opened his eyes to the prospect of VHS mass distribution.

"It encouraged me at the time to venture into distributing more material," Rees said in 1987 of the overwhelming public response to the Gristle release. "We've sold thousands of copies, and they don't want the new stuff—they want the old B&W *Cramps At Napa*. Part of the reason is the commercialization of both music videos and the groups that you see today, which don't say a damn thing—just make noise."

Amen. But what's happened to Rees and this invaluable, irreplaceable archive of sights and sounds?

Trust me, a lot of people would like to know.

As the adrenaline (and otherwise)-fueled punk movement shuddered to an end in the late 80s, Rees apparently lost his inspiration and Target sputtered into hazy memories of great parties.

Probably for legal reasons, the Target library is largely unavailable, with plenty of surviving bandmembers wondering what happened to the footage they signed away in a bid for immortality. Thus far, only former Dead Kennedys frontman Jello Biafra has managed to wheedle Rees out of his taped past. Perhaps the recent resurgence of the "alternative sound" will help lure Rees out of seclusion—as might the the growing interest in (and commercial value of) the 70s era. [TV]



Joe Rees during the Target heyday.







## CRAIG BALDWIN: THE OTHER FILMMAKER

by David E. Williams and Danny Plotnick

If one were to X-ray Craig Baldwin's head, it would surely be a surprise if his brain was devoid of any obvious deformities or malignancies. Tall, gangly and sporting the most curious facial hair seen outside a Fu Manchu flick, Baldwin lives up to his reputation—one of frenetically warped weirdness.

The Other Cinema, his ongoing showcase of films and videos from the edge of reality, is a definite must for any subculture aficionado within 100 miles of the Bay Area. A bizarre mishmash of media ranging from extremist agitprop and off-kilter documentaries to wacked out slices of twisted visions, the Other Cinema offers an all out assault on all that is sacred. With show titles like *LSD: Insight or Insanity* and *White and Lazy*, you vaguely get the picture.

"You see, there's more to programming a show than picking movies you love," Baldwin breathlessly admits in the dank, earthen-walled basement of the Artist's Television Access (ATA) theatre—the cave-like birthplace of his found-footage extravaganzas *Tribulation 99: Alien Anomalies Under America* and *O No Coronado* and the nerve center of his Other Cinema activities. "With the number of non-traditional and revival theaters in this town, I've got to stay a couple jumps ahead by searching out that rare nugget and showing underground stuff rather than the obvious stuff like Polanski and Buñuel." **[m4]**

For information regarding the Other Cinema shows or submitting your own films, contact Baldwin at the ATA, 992 Valencia Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94110.



(L to R): Trib 99 cinematographer Bill Daniel, brother/SLACKER cinematographer Lee Daniel and Craig Baldwin ponder a stick.

to be free-for-all genre-wise, allowing filmmakers to come in contact with others who make wildly different sorts of films—which might explain the weird hybrid works coming out of San Francisco.

## CELLULOID OVERLOAD

The largest distributor of independent and experimental shorts in the country, SF-based Canyon Cinema is yet another boon to the local filmmaking landscape. Canyon's mere presence infuses the city with a historical reference point, while also co-sponsoring shows featuring work from their extensive catalog. Canyon's involvement in the community and connection with local filmmakers helps weave new artists into the web of experimental film continuum and gives the locals a glimpse into an international distribution network—perhaps giving them some hope that their own projects may have a life outside the SF scene.

Canyon's warehouse of films, combined with the libraries of San Francisco State University and the San Francisco Art Institute give the community a wealth of classic titles which budding cineastes can pour over. Such access and exposure no doubt is another reason why so many filmmakers are supercharged and inspired in this town—given that they have a past to draw from and based further work on.

The above-mentioned universities have top-notch film programs, as does the lower-profile City College—not only supplying an influx of new talent but providing a healthy amount of access to no-cost equipment.

## THE FINALÉ

The end result is that San Francisco is a very inviting town for up-and-coming filmmakers. Offering an incredible amount of resources, venues, support systems and access to information, the city encourages, fosters and nurtures all kinds of activity. And best of all, it's a very tightly knit community, with each group supporting the other's endeavors and sharing their strengths—resulting in an incredibly cohesive film scene that actually works.

So move. **[m4]**

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SOMETHING THAT  
WON'T DIE?

WHERE DO YOU RUN  
WHEN THEY'RE  
EVERYWHERE?



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CARTOONS, I EDIT VIDEO FOR  
A LIVING.. (HA LIVING.) THIS INVOLVES  
A GREAT DEAL OF KEYPUNCHING

I STARTED TO GET  
SHOOTING PAINS IN  
MY RIGHT ARM AS  
A RESULT OF THIS  
WORK..



SO I  
WENT  
TO THE  
DOCTOR.



WELL? WHADDYA  
THINK DOC?

HMM.. UH..HMM..  
UH..HMM..  
EH, CARPAL  
TUNNEL SYNDROME!  
WE GOTTA  
AMPUTATE.

BUT  
THIS IS MY  
LEFT  
ARM!!!



BEFORE I COULD PROTEST FURTHER,  
HE STUCK A HYPO IN ME....

THEN PROCEEDED WITH HIS HELLISH PLAN!



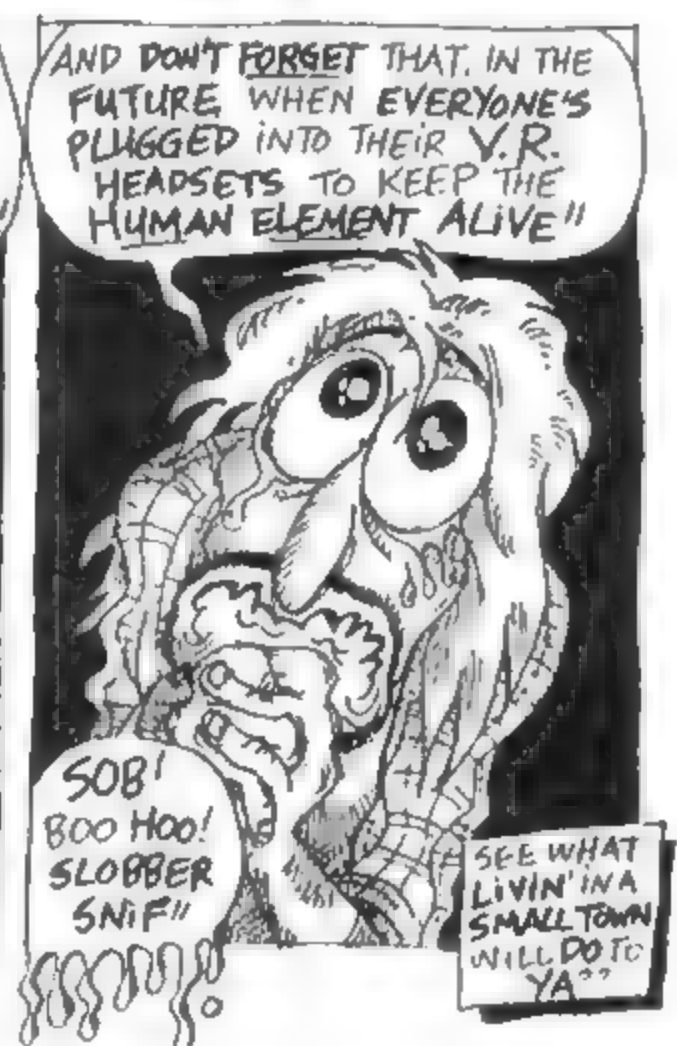
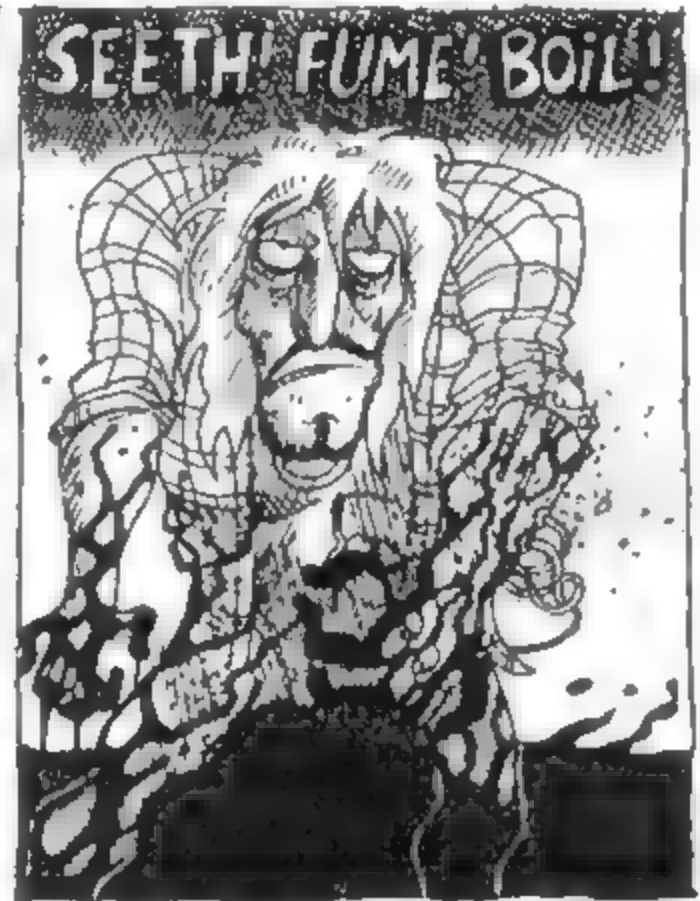
HIS PSYCHO EXPERIMENTS RESULTED  
IN..

THIS!!



I HAVEN'T FELT THE SAME SINCE.  
BUT, I HAVE REALIZED ONE THING;  
I'M TIRED OF BEING  
FUCKED OVER!!!

DEATH!  
DESTRUCTION!  
AND  
CHAOS! HERE  
I COME!!





# CROWN! KILLER

EARLIER THIS YEAR, I watched with mild interest as a Florida woman was gunned down by her estranged husband during the funeral for their daughter. As I stared unemotionally, jaw loosely clenched, eyes resting comfortably in their sockets, I realized that, yes, I had become desensitized to the barrage of video carnage that emanates from our nations airwaves. But at what point did this change in my behavior occur? CNN's coverage of the Gulf War? The infamous Rodney King beating? Or Nine Inch Nails' *Happiness in Slavery* video?

Well, I can't pinpoint the event, but it happened long before I sat down and watched *Tirez La Cerveau*, a sardonic spoof of French *film noirs* of the silent era. Imagine Marcel Marceau in an H.G. Lewis flick and you get a clue to *Tirez*'s breed of cinemutation. It was filmed over a weekend shoot by three humorously tweaked individuals: Matt Rose, the star and idea man; Aaron Sims, the benevolent mime and set provider (his back yard); and Marc

Tyler, cinematographer and technical wiz who captured the chiaroscuro style.

Since the majority of you will never experience this bizarre tale (Rose doesn't want anything to do with business, i.e. screwing people over to distribute his tapes), it is necessary to describe the brief, twisted plot. *Tirez La Cerveau* (loosely translated as *Show Me Your Brains*) begins with a disgruntled dreg of a man (Rose) vomiting at the

blossoming presence of a cute-as-a-button mime (Sims). The mime's congenial pleasantry violates the man's vehement sensibilities—prompting him to disembowel the defenseless sap before blowing a hole in his head. Throw in an umbrella brandishing clown, incongruously flavorful French soundtrack and plenty of gore and you get the essence of *Tirez La Cerveau*'s, shall we say, *je ne sais quoi*.

Sipping margaritas and munching on tortilla strips, I sat down with this eclectic bunch to probe their slightly deranged aura, and ask the one significant question regarding their darkly humorous, absurdly violent collaboration: Why?

"I guess it's a hobby," Tyler says

"Just blowing off steam."

Rose agrees, interjecting his monosyllabic reply, "Fun!"

"It was a blast!" Sims adds

For these guys who do most of their day job work behind the camera, getting a chance to release their cinematic energies may have been more therapeutic than anything. Rose remembers in vivid detail a student film

**Hershel Gordon Lewis meets Marcel Marceau in *TIREZ LA CERVEAU*,  
a not-for-the-timid Super 8 splatter spoof!**

**by Chris O'Flaherty**

festival he painfully attended, and it is apparent that *Tirez* is his counter-response.

"Not one was watchable," Rose says of the festival he endured. "So I sat there hoping somebody would get sick or something."

True, student films can get moronically tedious at times. So perhaps aspiring cineastes can learn something in *Tirez*'s brevity. Although the film's mind-numbing plot offers few redeeming values, it nonetheless captures and keeps the viewer's attention. Hollywood has long known that blood and guts are a great way to pad a film, but is *Tirez*'s carnage and bloodshed necessary in these sensitive, and politically correct times?

"It's almost cartoony," is Tyler's jaded response, offhandedly justifying the film's unprovoked savagery.

But Rose, the talkative one of the bunch, takes this one surreal step further: "It's suppose to be like this pretentious movie that goes too far. If it didn't have the violence in it, you'd wanna kill whoever made it."

"Definitely," chimes in the quiet Sims.

I must acknowledge the validity of this paradoxical response, considering that many films and videos lack some form of edge, copping out to please the masses. *Tirez La Cerveau*'s tongue-in-cheekiness can best be described as "male humor," that sick kind that dwells in the heart, soul and guts of bachelors and henpecked husbands alike. This has obviously resulted in the varied reactions of the friends and associates, male and female, who have had the privilege of seeing Rose and Sims' effort.

"The reactions were great," Rose recalls. "But I thought everybody was just laughing because Aaron and I were dressed up like idiots. I still think that's part of it."

"Yeah, we've had good responses," Sims adds. "But some positive and some negative..."

Negative, it seems, mostly with the female persuasion.

"I showed it to some friends of mine," recalls Rose. "And their wives were sitting there silent while the guys were

laughing. It was so painful. It was like showing it to my mom."

Tyler goes on to describe a female colleague's all-too-Freudian psychoanalytic response. "I think when he killed the mime he was really killing his inner child."

Enough about *Tirez La Cerveau*'s shocking absurdity, which may end up on a compilation bootleg coming to a VCR near you. The amazing thing is



Rose, (ABOVE, FAR LEFT) hamming it up amidst the intestines, would make John Wayne Gacy proud. BELOW, his more serious, blood-drenched self.



how, and with what little resources, it got completed

A general idea, a borrowed 20 year old Super 8 camera, and an overcast Saturday afternoon kept the production inexpensive, uncomplicated, and more importantly, fun for these three auteurs and their two man crew. Armed with a

sparse five rolls of film, they shot three, and saved two for reshoots.

"We wanted it to look cruddy and cheap and fuzzy and muddy," Tyler says. "So we just grabbed the camera and pointed it."

"We started at ten and finished at three," Rose flat-out confesses of the project's simplicity.

What made this five hour shoot different was the small amount of actual filming compared to the lengthy time it took Rose and Sims to locate costumes that not only matched their personal taste but also fitted them.

"It was embarrassingly long," Rose laments about the previous months spent searching for the perfect clown suit. "We couldn't find striped spandex, so we started going to dance places and ask 'Do you have tights for him?'" pointing at six foot, three inch tall Sims.

The majority of the shoot kept Sims and Rose constantly maintaining their ensembles. After shooting the scenes with Rose as the hung over denizen, they briefly stopped. Rose then shaved his head before donning his childish clown persona. Like I said, these guys were into some seriously fun film-making.

Months later, they finally got around to editing it in the short span of one evening. Originally, they had planned on syncing voices and sound effects, but were persuaded against it by director Steve Wang and sound technician Les Claypool, both of *Kung Fu Rascals* fame. Rose respected their opinion and kept *Tirez* timelessly silent, only adding the ardent French music that satirically complements the action.

As mentioned, Rose despises any form of business practices that may conflict with his newfound hobby, so don't expect him, or his cohorts, to sell out soon. Their hit list of concepts to spoof next include a German clown epic, an Italian one (Fellini style) and the train hopping hobo of the States.

But the most recent idea on Rose's mind: *Blinky Balloon-Popper*.

"It's the interrogation of a clown. He finally admits that he's a clown, and is tortured and killed right away."

Desensitized, or not, it's comedy. **FILM**

# STILL DERANGED AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

by  
Tom Brown

*The classically creepy cannibal flick Deranged rises from its distributor-less grave to shock a new (though more jaded) generation.*

**A**sk any true horror buff to name their personal "wish list" of movies yet to be released to video and nine out of ten will include *Deranged*. This little masterpiece arrived on the drive-in circuit in 1974, leaving as quickly as it came. I missed it. Based closely on the exploits of Ed Gein, *Deranged* has been deemed light-years ahead of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* in the scare-department.

For those of you who do not already know about Ed, he was a "momma's boy" who went AWOL after his domineering mother passed away. This was too much for lonely Ed, who dug her body up and attempted to keep it "fresh" by dressing it in skins from other dead bodies.

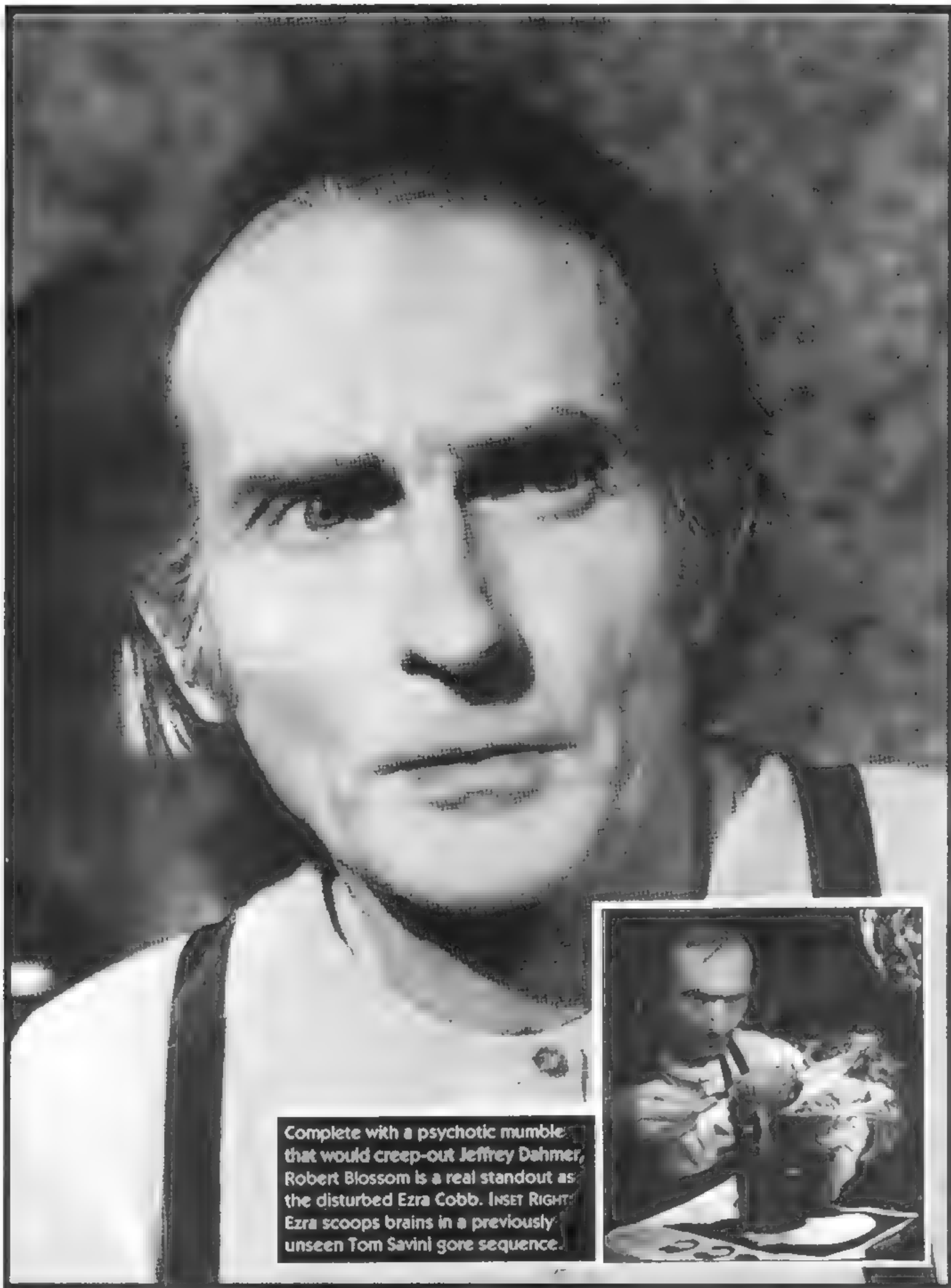
Later, after finding the gutted body of a young woman hanging on a hook in Gein's barn, law officials found a true "horror-show" inside his house. Among the fun items discovered were

a human heart in a sauce-pan, a "dress-up" suit made of twine and breasts, soup bowls made of skull caps . . . and the macabre list goes on.

Ol' Ed has been quite an influence on the modern horror film, soundly intertwined in such genre flicks as *Psycho*, *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and *Silence of the Lambs*. However, while these films only skim the surface of the Gein atrocities, *Deranged* is the true masterpiece of the Ed Gein story.

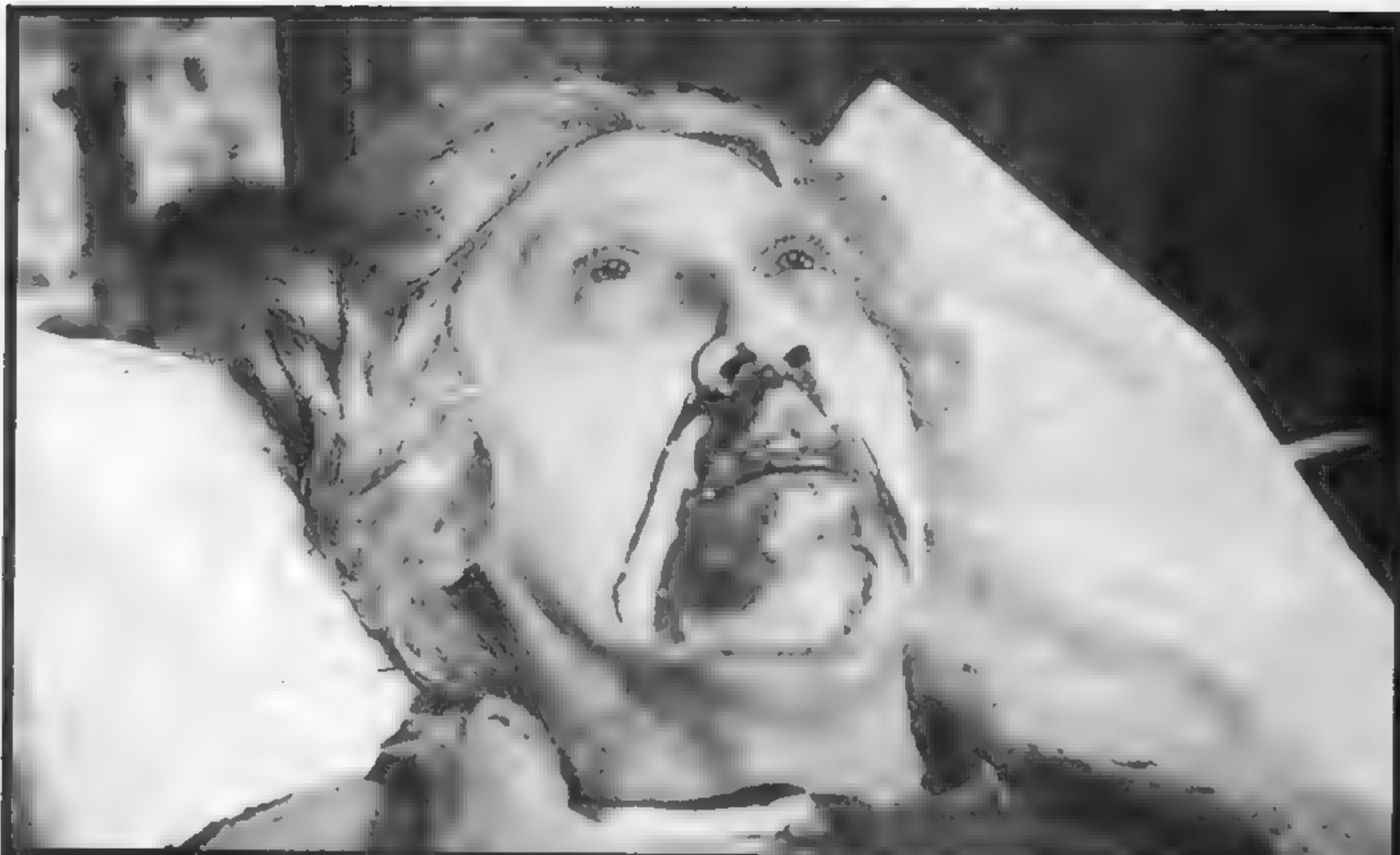
I was unaware of how difficult tracking down this legendary lost classic would be. Until recently, *Deranged* did not exist in any standard form other than a twentieth generation boot-leg copy, which is how I first viewed this deliciously dark, creepy-crawley masterpiece. Regardless of the horrible grainy quality of the video copy I finally obtained, this deliriously sick-and-twisted flick captivated me.





Complete with a psychotic mumble that would creep-out Jeffrey Dahmer, Robert Blossom is a real standout as the disturbed Ezra Cobb. INSET RIGHT: Ezra scoops brains in a previously unseen Tom Savini gore sequence.





**Momma finally kicks it, leaving Ezra wide open to unusual ideas involving the recently deceased.**

Surrounded by a host of talented supporting players, Roberts Blossom (*Resurrection, Close Encounters of the Third Kind*) turns out an incredible performance as Ezra Cobb, an obvious portrayal of Gein. The film's seedy look, coupled with a truly unsettling score of church hymns, creates an atmosphere of insanity and dread unequalled by any American horror film.

However, I yearned for a legal video release of some quality. After a lengthy search, I was excited to learn that Moore Video in Virginia was about to release a digitally mastered letter-boxed version with six minutes of extra footage—producer Tom Karr's original version of the film never released to the

theaters, which had lay dormant in his closet for nearly two decades.

My excitement was replaced by sheer ecstasy a few weeks later when I sat down to watch my screener of this movie. It looked about ten times better than I hoped, a beautiful crisp transfer with about six minutes of footage that blew me off my chair—including a Tom Savini-orchestrated,

knock-out gore sequence that gives *Deranged* real, visceral shock-value.

This scene, cut by Karr before submitting the film to the MPAA, consists of about three minutes of Ezra "preparing" a pilfered corpse to entertain his lonely momma. As if he were cleaning a chicken, Ez casually (though literally) spoons out an eyeball, followed by the matter of

cutting open the skull and carving out the offending brain—all shown in gut-queasy detail. To further avoid an X rating, Karr eliminated several close-ups of various corpse's faces, but they're all there in gruesome detail in this original cut.

Also included is extra narration from Tom Simms, the "reporter-at-large" character who introduces the



**Unable to bear his loneliness, Ezra recruits some new friends from beyond.**

film and hosts several scenes with a curious brand of lurid (yet titillating) commentary, extended "visits" to the graveyard by Ezra and additional dialogue in several scenes.

Taking five frustrating years to track down Karr in his quest for this pristine print, Michael Moore secured funding for the video transfer with a helpful loan from his wife, his associate producer David Manning White and by selling his mountain cabin I paid Moore a visit in Richmond, Virginia, and over a delicious lunch of fried cat-fish and gravy, I asked him some questions that were sticking in my mind.

*I had always heard that Bob Clark was the man most responsible for Deranged. Is this true?*

As is true for many talented professionals in the film business, friends often influence the outcome of creative projects. Tom Karr had been on the set of Clark's *Death Dream* Alan Ormsby had worked with Clark on *Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things*, and Clark, as a good friend of Karr's was often on the set of *Deranged*, but I feel that the vision of the Gein portrayal is totally Tom Karr's.

*Does Deranged hold any kind of soft-spot in your heart?*

Maybe a soft spot in my head! Just kidding, but after watching the film in various versions during the restoration process, I still enjoy it as much or even more, seeing something new each time I watch it. The Gein case has always fascinated me, which is why I re-edited the underground classic documentary *Ed Gein*—

*American Maniac* to follow *Deranged* on the tape

*What about the other people associated with Deranged, Tom Savini, Bob Clark, Roberts Blossom? Have they provided you with any input?*

Everyone has been so helpful in contributing what they had to offer. I've received the original poster, the lobby cards, the original shooting script, 25 publicity stills, the radio commercials and finally the original theatrical trailer in 35mm!

Tom Karr contributed his 16mm behind-the-scenes documentary and Tom Savini is doing an explanatory audio track for *The Deranged Chronicles: The Making of Deranged*, which is my next project with Tom Karr, due out later this year

*You're working on two other projects, a documentary about Ed Gein and a sequel?*

I'm working on the definitive "Ed" documentary, using *The Ed Gein Story* as a working title. For the

*Deranged* sequel, I'm working closely with Tom Karr. Savini has given us permission to use his name in promoting the new project. I'll ultimately be the executive producer, but I also might direct... we'll see



Ezra has fun and games with skeletal remains.

*Are there any other "lost classics" you're trying to find?*

I'm always searching for the rare and visually unusual. Just last fall I was able to dig up *Shanks*, William Castle's last film with Marcel

Marceau. It's an incredible zombie film with Marceau playing two parts. I

finally found [Werner Herzog's] *Even*

*Dwarves Started Small*, a black and white

German film from a 16mm print. I'm also

negotiating on another Gein-inspired opus, which

I can't talk about yet



*If nothing else, meeting Moore taught me there are two kinds of film people: those that sit around and wish a certain film was available, and those that have the testicles to go out and climb a mountain to find it.* **TM**



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# SHAMELESS PLUG!

*Mindless T&A exploitation has never been so palatable!  
But why should the average shut-in prefer CREATURES OF THE NIGHT  
over its X-rated brethren?*

*by Rowdy Yates*

**D**ESPITE THE VIDEO revolution, plenty of people are still terrified to walk into the local video outlet and proudly rent the grungy likes of *Buttman In Brazil*, *Dirty Debutantes 3* or even those "tasteful" (yet impossibly detached and passionless) Andrew Blake efforts. Even more pathetic, others are too paranoid of rumored FBI-sanctioned postal inspections to engage in the lazy, shop-at-home, mail order approach to sexual paraphernalia. (And even worse, you always seem to end up on some annoying mailing list.) "Land of the Free" or not, America is still a hopelessly Victorian outpost in a world full of debauchery. And though it sometimes seems a bit safer to be a repressed, upright, genderless drone devoid of hormonal urges, there comes a time when everybody's got to blow some... steam. Especially when your prospects of getting any play are as low as those of the average FTVG reader



Did CREATURES' black-clad "Mysterious Stranger" wander in off some grisly Argento opus—or just looking for a good time?



The driver of CREATURES' erotic obsessions, but not the one responsible for the film's best scenes.

(or worse yet, the staff).

Hence the development of the "erotic" as opposed to downright gynecological and the impetus for Neck Down Productions to abandon their society-imposed morals and join in on the relentless celluloid exploitation of women.

Deciding to shun the most insulting aspect of the genre (i.e. the ludicrous "story" that supposedly fills the down-time gaps in the action), *Creatures of the Night* producer/director-types Merle Bertrand, William Ambrico and Todd Spencer cooked up a remarkably flimsy excuse-of-a-plot (which suffices) and focused instead on the cheese.

Cashing in a few favors and weaseling when possible, Neck Down blew their budgetary wad on plenty of lace and satin lingerie and a multi-ethnic array of beauties more than willing to get naked for the right price.



"It was pretty weird at first," admits Bertrand (who's also a frequent FTVG contributor) about shooting *Creatures*. "We all thought it would be really uptight and nervous about the girls—I mean, who wouldn't—but after the first hour it became pretty. . . uh, well, we weren't *that* nervous. Just kinda."

"We'd done a similar project for another company and learned a lot from our mistakes. We didn't want to do anything too rough, but knew most people think 'erotic' is pretty synonymous with 'lame.' So, we tried to think of things and situations that we could pull off and avoid the boring 'staring into each other's eyes' stuff. But it's not like we wanted to be Richard Kern either."

Replete with mud wrestling, striptease action, some mild B&D and a stand-out scene of psycho-sexual surrealism, *Creatures of the Night* plays like a smorgasbord of adolescent male fantasies—sleazy, yet demure, like some Betty Page loop. The Neck Down trio wisely augmented this nostalgic tone by trading in the genre's modern-age, shot-on-video production standards for the softer look of film—mixing color and B&W stock and shooting in the cost-effective Super 8 format.

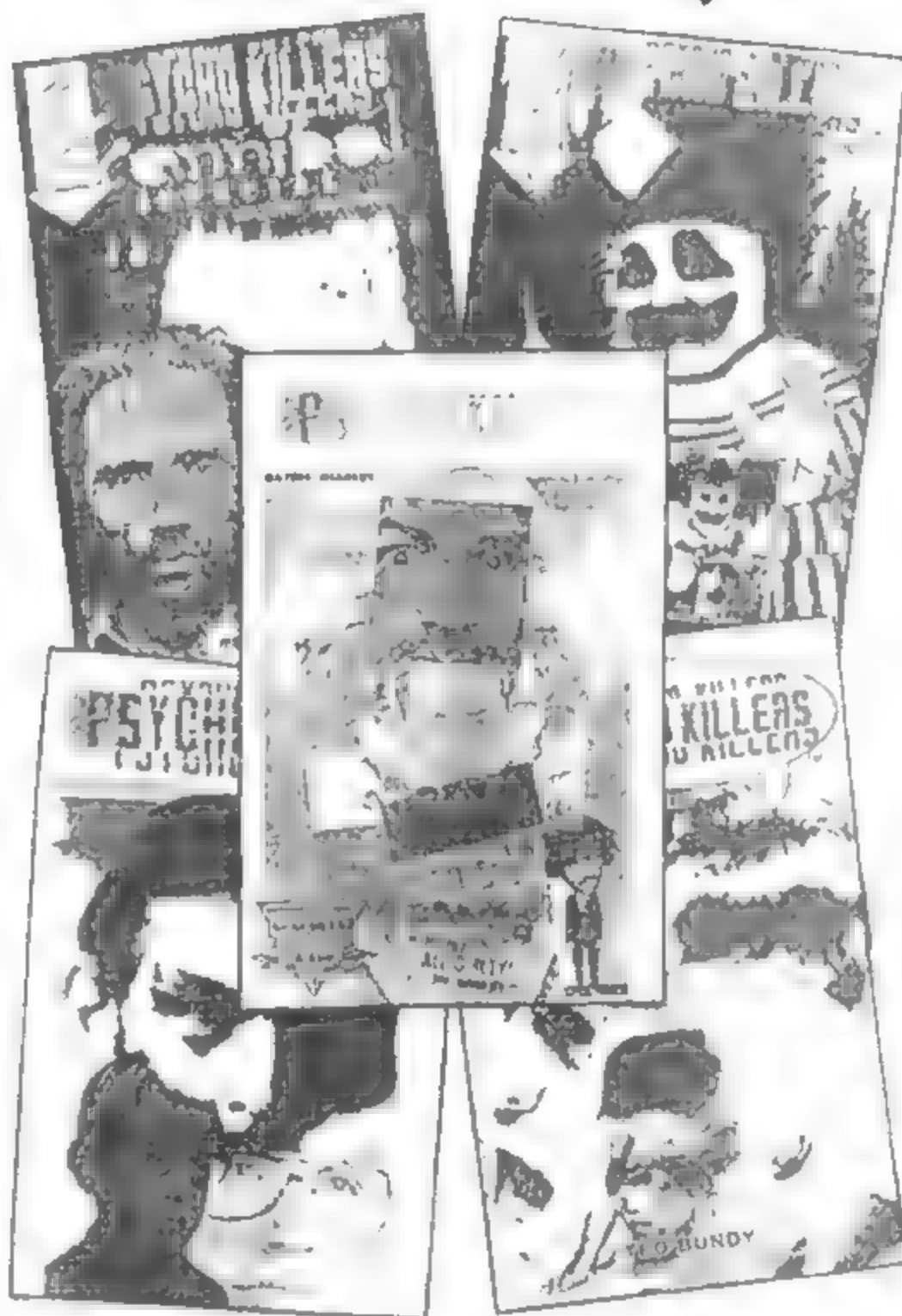
However, *Creatures* is anything *but* nostalgic. Incorporating a heavy-metal soundtrack, the voyeuristic possibilities of video and plenty of body-hugging fashions (which are promptly removed, of course), this collection of naughty moments is planted firmly in the sexually-scary 90s.

Whatever reasons a person might have for employing the likes of *Creatures of the Night*, there are plenty of worse ways to spend an evening—like worrying about why you'd have to in the first place. **UFA**



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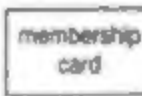
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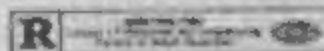
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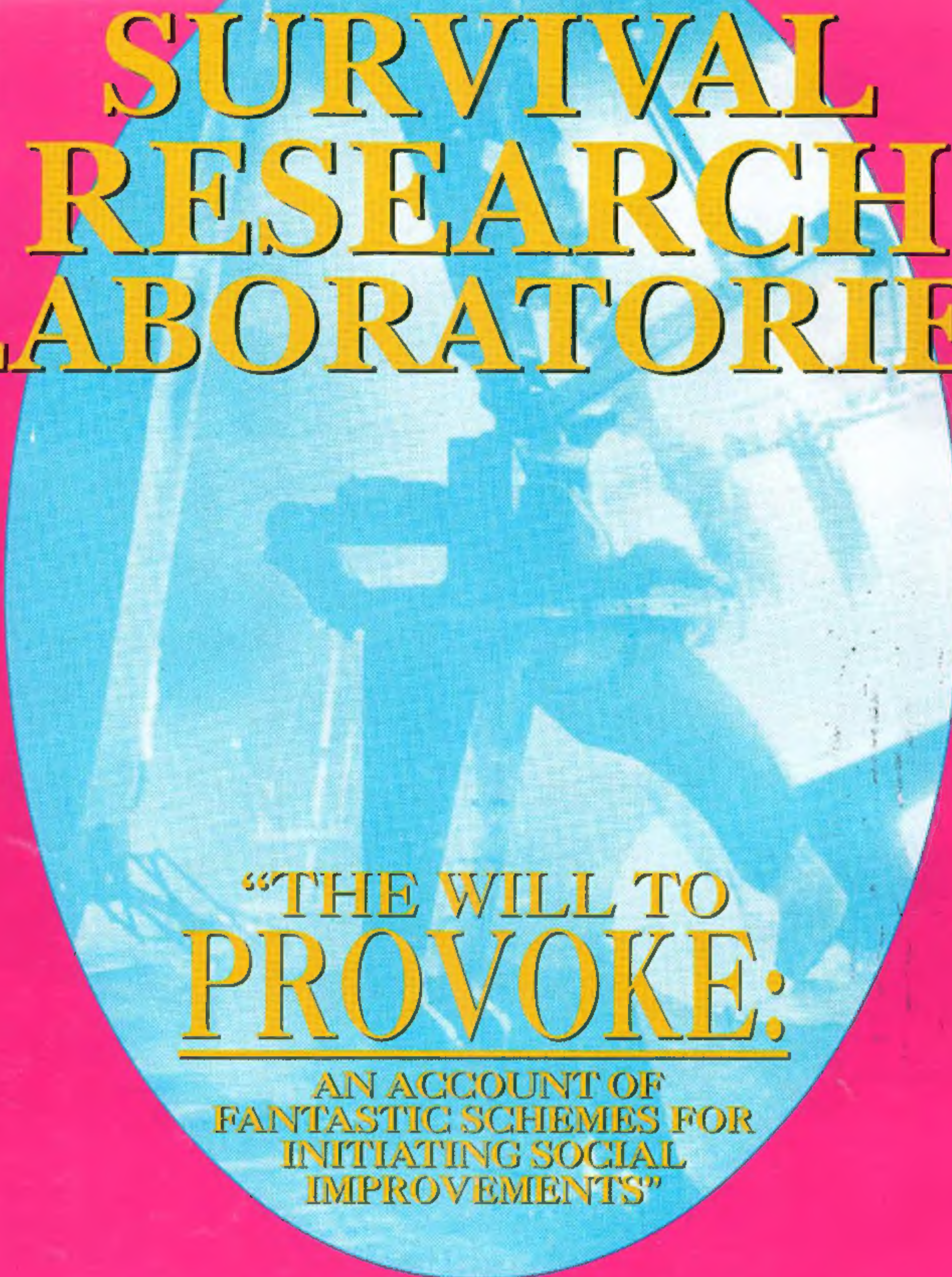
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